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MERELY PLAYERS

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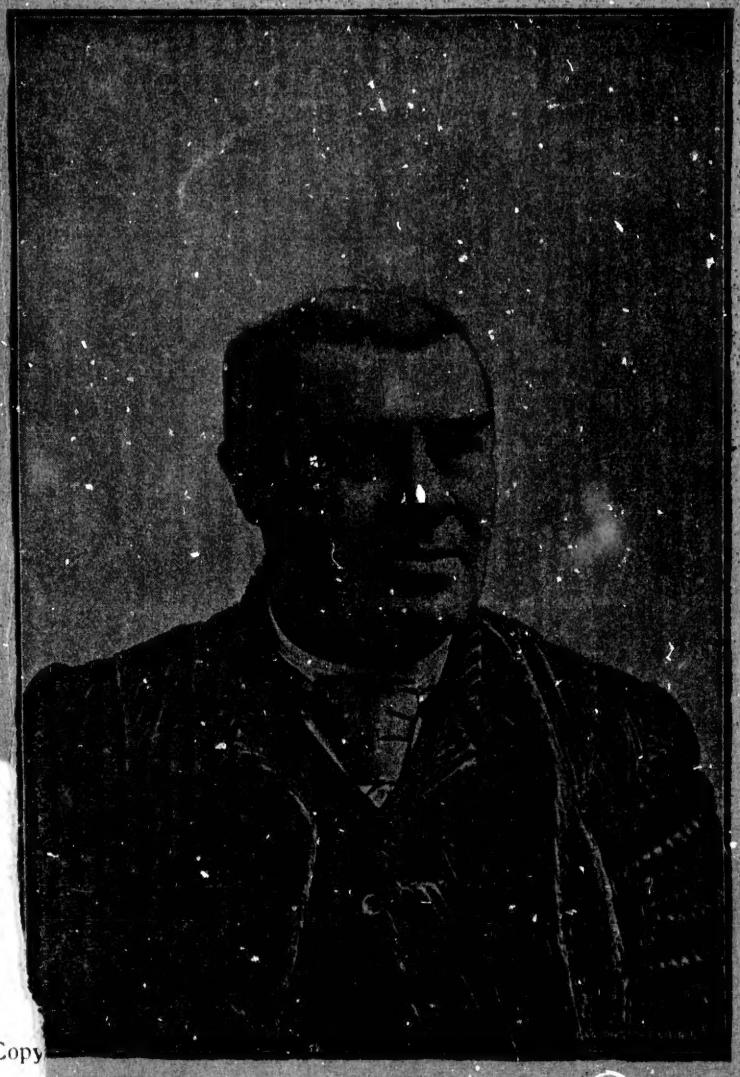

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RRY LINDLEY, Comedian.

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MERELY PLAYERS

BY

HARRY LINDLEY,

COMEDIAN.

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DEDICATION.

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO

MY "KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS" BRETHREN,

MORE ESPECIALLY

LODGE "NO. 1 MYSTIC," OF TORONTO,

Of which I am a very early member, and of which my youngest daughter bears the name.

And am yours in F. C. B.,

HARRY LINDLEY,
Comedian.

PREFACE.

In Baltimore when I produced a play which was ultra-sensational and probably ultra-absurd in its *mortif*, but which drew money to our exchequer, one of the newspapers put the query. "For what reason did Mr. Lindley write this play?" I replied that, like Shakespeare, I wrote for money, but, that unlike the immortal bard, I fully believed I would not trouble the lawyer to make a will, leaving a fortune for my kindred to quarrel over.

Probably some of my readers will say, why did I write this book? Same answer will suffice. Its contents, however, may be the means of taking off some of the glamour that surrounds the stage, and by these means lead those who have become technically stage struck to inquire whether it is worth while to give up, in some cases, "father, mother and kindred" to follow a precarious profession, which, while it has some prizes, offers a preponderance of blanks.

I have relied in most instances on memory, but I have not wrongfully misstated herein anything, nor have I "wilfully extenuated or set down aught in malice."

At the same time I pray the critics to be merciful, as this is not a connected autobiography, although somewhat in that strain, but merely a number of events loosely strung together, giving an Olla Podrida of serious and humorous circumstances.

I may occasionally, (to use a professional phrase,) be a little mixed in my dates, and if the sequence is irregular the facts are there, and if I have sacrificed the unities anywhere it may be attributed to haste.

With these few preliminary remarks I ring up the curtain.

HARRY LINDLEY.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS.

The adage "*poeta nascitur non fit*" seems to me to be in the reverse as regards an actor, for although the actor may be original in his methods, still it is an absolute necessity that his attempts to portray nature should be artificial, and furthermore the nearer he approaches nature, the less likely he is to succeed. Later on I will exemplify this fact. I use this as a prelude to say that I was not a born actor, far from it, and what little I know of the actors' art has been, as it were, instilled into me by study, and I am not ashamed to say, imitation. My first visit to a Theatre, nearly half a century ago, was in a country town where we were summering. There was great excitement in the town, for a booth had been erected and the caravans and play-folks had come to stay. A booth is not a familiar thing on this continent but common in England. The composition consists of canvas roof and wooden shutters, oblong in shape. These with seats, scenery, etc., are conveyed on flat wagons, which aforesaid wagons are used for the stage and sometimes for two stages, one for internal and the other, during Fairs, for external use, when King Richard, Romeo, Macbeth, Lear and the heroes of Ringleted melodramas parade in hybrid garments in company with Lady Anne, Juliet, Lady Macbeth, and possibly the Columbine. These itinerant delineators of the tragic and comic muse generally reside in the auditorium, although the manager may live in a beautiful palace on four wheels, painted yellow, as Grinnidge has it. The opening attraction, which was extensively announced on painted posters, was "The Green Bushes." The housemaid, who led me on this eventful evening to witness this, to me unknown and fairyland (and that, too, at risk of dismissal), was a creature of sentiment. She sat upon those hard and abbreviated seats and wept honest tears at the heroine's sorrows, and laughed unrestrainedly at the vagaries of the comedians. That it was delirium to me—that it was romantic—that it was the acme of splendid enjoyment—well, *cela va sans dire*. The wild Huntress of the

Mississippi, in garments composed of dilapidated rugs supposed to represent skins, a headgear in which turkey feathers predominated, a short skirt of brown cotton flannel, and stockings or tights, down whose sides were rows of buttons, made an undying impression upon my juvenile mind. She was tall—unusually so. She was somewhat ungainly, her voice a little harsh, but to me she was the genius of tragedy, and when she precipitated herself into the roaring waters with the despairing exclamation, "River of my race, receive me," my admiration knew no bounds, although the rescue by a boat which oscillated painfully and of which the wheels were visible, was apt to give my imagination a severe shock. The comedian, by name Burton, was an artist to me then, and years after I saw him was an artist still, and the sardonic, repulsive, drunken villain with matted hair and elongated strides filled me with admiration. I remember the housemaid whispering to me with awe "That's Shakespeare Walton." I understood afterwards that the gentleman had appeared at the Strand Theatre as a lineal descendant of the immortal bard, and, despite the fact that his talents were unusual, had been consigned to the country as an impostor. The rest of the *dram-personæ* have been seen in the miniature stages of the "Miller and his Men." This ancient melodrama, written, by the way, by the funniest comedian I ever saw, was to me a revelation. I went home and slept and dreamt of sweet Nelly O'Neill, and I remember on awaking the next morning I was discordantly trying to sing "I'll buy you fine beavers and fine silken gowns." Early after breakfast I was looking at the fabric which contained so many jewels. Thence I wandered to the managerial caravan, and there I saw my wild huntress. She was at the door affixing to a line a pair of unknown garments to me, and in shrill tones called out, "Will, when you go up to the village, see if you can buy another pink saucer to dye those tights." I wandered around and gazed with awe at a monstrous yellow dog, and peeping in the booth was warned off in comedy tones by a man with a plain, good-natured, but worn face. Mustering up courage I asked him if he was the gentleman who was scalped last night, which seemed to please him, and when I said I laughed at him, he smiled still more, put his hand in his pocket, gave me a penny and requested me to come and see him play Hamlet, as he told me he could pull more faces and get more

LEADING LADY OF THE BOOTH.
BRING ME A PINK SAUCER TO DYE MY TIGHTS.

laughs out of that character. I left him actuated and fired by dramatic ambition. The age of booths in "Merrie England" has almost past away, but although the nomenclature of its votaries judicially was "vagabond by act of parliament," yet from their ranks have sprung the greater lights of the dramatic stage, and *en passant* I recall the fact that sitting next to "Charles Dickens" at the Theatrical fund dinner"—by the bye, the last to which he ever came—I heard that big-hearted, noble man, in his after-dinner speech bear testimony to the virtues of the poor stroller in a strain full of pathos, and master of his art as he was, he then adroitly gave a description of their nomadic life, filling the auditors with laughter.

Following in his wake came one equally as bright in her way, Mrs. Stirling, with her tribute of respect and love to all the members of the craft from these primitive exponents to the brighter luminaries

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CHAPTER II.

SCHOOLBOY DAYS.

I was educated at a public school, where, as goes the prospectus, "a liberal and classical education, French and German so much extra —no corporal punishment allowed—lessons on the cornet by an old soldier—dancing by an eminent professor," formed stellar features, and among my co-mates and companions in exile was the celebrated unionist, Joseph Chamberlain, but—I do not propose to be autobiographical. I am merely giving some idea how seed takes root in the dramatic heart. Shakespeare was one of our studies, and the best essay on the bard of Avon usually elicited a diploma of merit.

These halycon days of youth were happiness indeed, and when as was customary with the "boarders" we were taken to the Theatre, it was to us a day, or rather a night, of jubilee. The Professors usually chose some distinctive play, wherein the moral was unobjectionable, and which bore the stamp of being legitimate. Attired faultlessly and scrupulously starched, we marched into boxes, where we sat and munched oranges, and envied the boys in the gallery, who could

with yelling voices and perspiring faces indulge in their conventional freedom and shout order or encore, whilst we surveyed them and the stage with aristocratic hauteur and pious demeanour.

Among other attractions I saw Couldock in his prime give a faithful portrait of the wily Cardinal Richelieu, and although I have played in the drama with Booth, King, Forest and many others, still his energetic manner and wonderful power in the "Curse Scene" always lived in my memory. I have played with him since in that drama, which has been the forerunner of the Hazel Kirke and country school of acting, viz., Willow Corpse, and I have often imagined that the wealth poured in on others went astray from him. I have heard anecdotes *ad nauseam* of his peculiar splenitiveness in business, and have witnessed some, but there is the best of heart inside of his rough manner. He had a grim humour in his roughness. Well do I remember being sent with him on a stellar tour and business not filling up the exchequer and his addition to the text in the part of Luke, "I can't read, I can't write," and with a grin, looking at the audience, "and I can't draw." Our greatest scholastic treat, however, was "The Pantomime." It is peculiar with what fondness the Britisher sticks to his Christmas extravaganza, whilst in America it does not take root at all. The amounts lavished upon this style of entertainment are fabulous, whilst months of preparation are used to ensure success. Whether the story be "Jack the Giant Killer," "Jack Sprat," "Jack and the Bean Stalk," "Robinson Crusoe," or any other popular story, the plot will be steadfastly followed, but the component parts are *semper idem*, viz., music hall songs travestied, local topics, dances and bad rhyme, illustrated by pretty girls and comedians whose humor must be ultra-farcical, for the opening portion, with a gorgeous transformation scene, in which fairies predominate, leading on to the change of characters for the pantomimical portion of the entertainment. What Britisher cannot recall his joy at the antics of clowns, pantaloons who commit brutal murders on stage policemen, stage bull dogs, stage soldiers, grunting porkers and beautiful ladies who will be all thrown into the sausage machine and emerge from thence into blue sausages, mottled sausages, red sausages, in fact any kind of sausage to suit the type of being that went in, or their gloomy bed-chambers where to would-be sleepers the bed-

posts elongate into spectres, sheets walk, pillows fly and pictures change, bed-bugs (of colossal dimensions) walk around and finally all vanish into air, leaving the apostles of fun probably locked in each other's arms. These and other unconventional modes of life are travestied, and we, as other boys have done before and will do again, recalled and recalled with glee the faces (masks) of the gnomes and imps, the designs for which in English pantomime have risen to an art.

One artist in masks I can remember who bore the sobriquet of "Dykwynkyn" at Drury Lane, whose faces where marvels of humour and whose fame was not alone English but continental; yet in America, with the exception of G. L. Fox, I do not remember a pantomimic success, and his pantomime was not of the English school at all, nor even his make-up. It was the French Pierrott in style as regards quiet face play and costume. An attempt was once made by W. H. Simpson to introduce a Christmas Pantomime *a l'Anglaise* at Wood's Theatre, New York. He brought actors, scenery, masks, etc., at an immense outlay, but it failed completely to catch the American public, and yet it had one of the best English comedians, Joseph Irving, in the opening, and Abbott, a first-class English clown, in the harlequinade. During my educational career these to us, too infrequent events, brought us, however, glimpses of Charles Kean, Gustavus Brooke, Mdme. Celeste, and probably also the two greatest dramatic remembrances of my life, (although one was rather more of a musical event), *viz*; Jenny Lind and the other "The Guild of Literature and Art." They played for sweet charity's sake. Charles Dickens, with his Christmas stories, which, as they annually appeared, were the luxuries of life to our boyhood, had been only dreamt of, as a superior being, but when we heard that we were to visit his performance we were in a fever of expectation. Associated in this guild were also Mark Lemon, whom we knew as founder of *Punch*, Augustus Egg and other literary, artistic and poetic celebrities, holding up "the mirror to nature" in a play written by Wilkie Collins, which, although of a weird character, has been copied, in many forms, at a later date. Probably the realization of our delight was not as good as the anticipation, inasmuch as the actors were not all "native and to the manner born," yet we saw before us in the flesh the creator of poor

Smike, Sairey Gamp, Sam Weller and the Pickwickian heroes. There was also one other performance remembered with pleasure, viz: Meyerbeer's "Le Prophete," which we saw produced on a scale of unusual splendour. After a few years I was sent for tutelage under the auspices of Doctor Newman, the gifted author of "Apologia pro vitæ suœ," but I was restless and entreated my father to take me home and give me a trial at a commercial life with him.

CHAPTER III.

AMATEURS.

Did my readers ever manage an amateur dramatic association? Marshalling battalions is nothing to it. Actors are assumed to be of tender and sensiative nature, but the hide generally gets tanned, and they can bear the buffets, etc. An amateur is composed of quips, cranks and oddities; he is neither fish, flesh, fowl or red herring, but a sensitive plant,—a dramatic suckling. There are not six Romeos, nor Hamlets, nor Claudes in one play, so five will be naturally slighted because the sixth enacts the part. The characters of old men and women are *betes noir* likewise, whilst the villain is looked upon as a disagreeable character and might alienate the affections of the girl he loves best (in the audience.) The utility man feels that he could put into insignificance the efforts of the leading man, whilst the corrections of the stage manager are considered to be beneath notice. My first efforts as an amateur were exalted. I had seen Gustavus Brooke play "Sir Giles Over-reach." He was a great actor. Poor fellow he went down with the ship London, bound for Australia, as heroically as one of his own Roman impersonations. My head was full of the play, and I read and re-read it. The part I had chosen was "Justice Greedy." We rehearsed it for six weeks, and probably changed the cast a dozen times, one discontented, one falling out and another falling in, but finally reached the desired end. We engaged professional ladies, who were received with as much homage as queens and looked up to as beings of a superior world, and paid for as

liberally as they could desire. The object was charity and the house was packed. The performance was far better than could be expected, as, with the exception of the young lover, who had taken several glasses of cordial to give him courage, and who consequently mumbled and grumbled his lines considerably, all were perfect in the text, and the Garrick Club, which title we had adopted, was a success. Play after play succeeded each other, and pleasant evenings ensued as we produced "Still Waters Run Deep," "Merchant of Venice," "Honeymoon," etc., and finally I produced a play from my own pen, "May and December," which, although crude, made its way accidentally to the London boards and is now sometimes acted. I have spoken of the gentlemen who required "Dutch courage," but from practical observation I never found that stimulants improve the dramatic mind, with but one exception, and that a great tragedian, whom I have seen swallow during the performance of "Othello" a pint or more of V. O. Brandy, and yet give so vigorous a performance as to elicit a call in the handkerchief scene. The choice of a play to amateurs is one of the greatest difficulties, as "many men, many minds," and when it comes to selection it would seem as if it were absolutely necessary to hire an author to suit the idiosyncrasies of the aspirants. There's one peculiarity I've noticed in certain cities. An amateur will have an enormous reputation, he will be the greatest tragedian or comedian ever seen (according to the local lights)—they say, "once get him on the regular stage he would astonish the world." Yet, on most occasions, I've discovered that when given the opportunity amongst professionals, the aforesaid amateur "dwindles, peaks and pines," although, of course, it may happen that by practice, he may ultimately become a good actor or star. It is doubtless in this case that the amateur is the embryo actor.

However, we will leave the discursive for the reminiscent.

The Earl of Dudley was "Colonel" of the Yeomanry Cavalry, a glorious institution which was sometimes of service in putting down strikers when the strikers exceeded the law. They drill occasionally, and for ten days annually gave active service at Worcester, the Shire city. My father being *en rapport* with the Earl I must needs become a member of the corps, and was gazetted through the Earl's influence as cornet. This is not a musical instrument. Does the title exist

now? I know not, but its functions are equivalent to a second lieutenant. Every horse in our company had to be grey, and its monetary value over twenty pounds, besides which there were premiums as the value of horses increased, consequently they were the best of the shire. Our annual drill was a saturnalia, on which occasion, attired in red coats, helmets and high boots, our swords jingling at our sides, we ogled the girls, were envied by the men, and at night battles with the rougher elements of the townspeople were not unusual. There was the attraction of the Yeomanry Ball, also an amateur performance by the "Corps," under the distinguished patronage of the Earl of Dudley, Sir John Packington, Lord Clive, &c.

The Earl was as full of *bonhomie* and joy as a school boy. He was liberality personified, and although his title was not won by battle or noble deed, he was an adept in knowledge and a connoisseur in art, as his collection of old masters, "The Dudley gallery," shows. Our entertainment was a success, and during the second act the nobility strolled from the private box to the stage. There they stood, Dudley, Packington and the rest, bristling with compliments to actors and actresses. I gave the signal, up went the curtain and discovered the first Lord of the Admiralty making a bee line for the wings, followed by the noble army. The Earl coolly advanced and, amidst the shouts of the audience, adjusted his eye-glass, smiled and said: "This is my first appearance, I thank you and the actors. I have not rehearsed my part so I will retire and leave the play to be finished by better hands."

The Earl of Stamford was a great patron of amateurs, an enthusiast on cricket, a monomaniac on flowers, and a lunatic on fireworks. At his country seat, "Enville Hall," he would amalgamate all these passions and invite the whole country to his *fetes* or free show. There the "All England Eleven" cricketers would contest with "Stamford and Warrington's" picked twenty-two. The public would tear around amongst the finest collection of flowers and shrubs in the land, and when dark, colored lights and fireworks would illuminate shrubs, trees, conservatories and groves. *On dit* that the countess was of circus extraction, but anyway she was a good rider, and it is also said that whilst the Earl was frittering his wealth, that on one occasion she looked up at the rockets and exclaimed: "This must be stopped, you can't fizz all our money away in this manner."

We were the crack amateur corps of the Midland counties, and would occasionally electrify other burghs than our own, and from the same club sprang many actors who are now doing duty in England, America, and even the antipodes.

So, as in my case, the amateur imbibes his love for the stage from its teachings. He loses fear of the public and ultimately sallies forth, new worlds to conquer.

The ranks must be replenished somewhere, and this emigration helps the art, but yet I would not counsel amateurs to risk the chances of success. The prizes are so few, the blanks so many, and I have often heard it said that if an actor were to use the same energy, the same persistence, the same intellectual labor in any other walk of life, that his reward would be much greater. The love of the stage is a species of lunacy, a hallucination. As one old actor once said to me, all actors are mad; if they were not mad they would not be actors. I may safely add that I have refused hundreds of young girls who thought that the road to greatness was simple. I have portrayed to them its hardships and trials, yet it had no deterrent effect.

Once a young girl of about fifteen, in short dresses, came to me and said with much rustic archness: "I want to be an actress, will you teach me and take me with you?" Have you a father and big brother? Yes, she replied. Well, go to each of them and ask them their fighting weight and come back and let me know. She never came back, but twelve years after I met the same lady in a "busted up" community of actors. She reminded me of the circumstance, and said "You see I was determined to get there, and I got there." Well? Well, I'm sorry for it. The glare of the foot-lights, the applause and the laughter of the audience are doubtless the allurements. They are meat and drink to an actor, but although I have played during the ages of candles, kerosene, gas and incandescents, I may safely say that although these were incentives to exertion, that more solid pabulum was never objectionable.

Many amateurs with money commence their career at the top of the ladder, lose their money and slide ungracefully to the bottom, and worse than all, there is the society lady, whose notoriety has made her famous, or infamous, who makes the stage a *dernier ressort* for the exhibition of her charms, or in some cases disfigurements,

(witness Biss De Bar,) and do more to disgrace their calling than the intellect of a better class can do to raise it.

The introduction of cultured amateurs, such as prize-fighters, divorcees, criminal personages and safe blowers, results, probably, in pecuniary benefit to outside managers, but it is the noxious fungus on the otherwise healthy tree. One of these ladies I had the misery of supporting (as she was supporting me), and we started *en tour* through the New England States. Her money fled but she never repined. Our fame, or rather newspaper articles, depicting in glowing colors the past career of our stellar attraction, reached New Haven, Conn., and on the evening of the performance of "Esmeralda," a burlesque, the students gathered *en masse* and welcomed from the gallery our efforts to amuse with showers of paper pellets. In a lull of leisure I stalked gloomily to the front, received a few wads, then graciously looking up at the offenders I queried *Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ*, a retort which caught their fancy and exonerated me for the rest of the evening.

CHAPTER IV.

A PROFESSIONAL.

Upon some trifling slight one evening I hied me away to the great metropolis of art, London, and hovered around Bow street and what were technically termed "The Shambles," waiting an opportunity to be butchered by the dramatic agent, and to butcher Shakespeare and the poets in turn. I waited and waited, but at last I saw in a dramatic paper, "The Era," an advertisement for a singing low comedian. I answered it, received reply, "Come on at salary of thirty shillings per week." I reflected inwardly that the town (Kilmarnock, in Scotland,) was not exactly the nurturing font of genius, but it was a start. I embarked with a stock of six wigs and sundry properties, and arrived there in due course, after craning my neck for hours at the Border, to gain a glimpse of Gretna Green, and revelling in the diversified scenery between Carlisle and Dumfries and my destination.

On arrival I looked for lodgings, found them and then asked the locality of the Theatre Royal. I was directed there, and to my intense surprise the regal temple was a railway arch, sides built of wood, but duly furnished within with the necessary requirements. Its walls and roof were percolating with grimy moisture, but ambition overlooked these drawbacks, and with faltering footsteps I hastened to the abode of the manager, where I introduced myself. He had the appearance and manner of a gentleman having been educated for the bar, but his weakness was for the other bar, where whiskey and not Blackstone rules. With other faults he was somewhat light-headed. He informed me that I was cast for the first witch in "Macbeth," Glavis in "Lady of Lyons," Antolycus in "Winter's Tale," Blueskin in "Jack Sheppard," Cheap John in "Flowers of the Forest," and Polonius in "Hamlet," all in one week and all new. I did not confess my ignorance, but said give me the books and I would be all right. There was a farce in addition to nearly all, but proverbially he gave me my choice of them. I studied till parts, books and eyes were blurred, but managed to get through. The surroundings were awful—the property man was a woman—with a broad lowland accent, who also enacted utility; her second actress in "Hamlet" being a revelation, and her intonation of "*But wae is me I am so seck o' late,*" was a parody on the immortal bard. The heavy man was a confirmed sot, and his king in "Hamlet" was burlesque burlesqued. In fact all the actors out-Heroded Herod.

The next week was a repetition of the first, only more gloomy, as there was a stellar attraction, a Miss Goddard, who possessed talent of the highest order, and regaled the audience with nightmares of tragedy, such as Bertram, Fazio, etc., but which were a rest to me as I enacted the old men, second heavies, etc. Her "Winter's Tale" was a relief, as I revelled in the humors of Autolycus and received her special commendation. On the third week salaries were not forthcoming, but the manager came in on Thursday and handed each member four pounds of tea, and informed us that he had pawned certain articles but had to take tea instead of money. We grinned and bore it, as he had a monster night projected with "Rob Roy." I played the "Baillie," and to get some idea of the dialect, got my landlord (a tailor) to read the lines, and thus I gave a passable imita-

tion of the tailor, if not of the Baillie. On the Sabbath my tailor friend invited me to kirk and dinner. I went, my stomach full of expectancy of dainties, but being a "guid mon" the luxuries consisted of boiled salt herrings and potatoes, mingled with a "guid" deal of Presbyterian doctrine. My termination of the engagement was peculiar. We had been invited out for a pleasant afternoon by a weaver, who insisted on regaling the company with Jock o' Hazeldean and mutchkins of whiskey. I am sorry to say that, with the others, the toddy was too much for me. I arrived at the theatre with head swimming. I dressed myself with one shoe and staggered on to my cue. Three of us looked blankly at each other and the leading lady scowled. A ghastly, idiotic smile was all the response; she prompted, we grinned. She threw down her regal sceptre and left us with one word—"beasts." The audience hissed; I looked at them idiotically, clung convulsively to the proscenium wing, and during the interval of silence gulped out, "You are the intelligent Scottish public—damn the Scottish public." My spirited anathema gained me applause, and the next thing I saw was the leading gentleman, with drawn sword, stumbling over fiddles into the audience, an immense clamor, men seemed to be flying through the air, and the "rest was silence,"—I was fast asleep.

I got an immense amount of advertising in the local newspapers, also my discharge without salary, and a firm determination never to get drunk again. The management struggled on for a few nights further, and then, as I was waiting replies to letters, and none came, I was solicited by a Scotch actor to join him and three others and tour the shire, which we did, taking towns like Dalry, Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Irvine, Ayr, etc., as starters. I was a firm walker, and ten or twelve miles walk through the country which is dearest to all Scotchmen, "The land of Burns," was, to me not a torture, but a pilgrimage. The bawbees were few, but we did well enough, as it was summer, and I visited the "Twa Brigs," Alloa Kirk and all the spots endeared to his countrymen by the plowman-poet's verse.

In Ayr there was a theatre. It was antiquated, musty, and stood in a forlorn location, but we booked there for three days, and gave a mixture of drama, readings, songs and farce, and on the last night a bespeak under the distinguished patronage of "Sir 'Somebody'

Ferguson," who resided near there. My room overlooked the river, and from the window I fished all day, but at night I was a fisher of men, who did not bite greedily. The scenery around me was beautiful. The bay—well they said it was as beautiful as the "Bay of Naples." How is it that in every clime, when speaking in admiration of its local bay, that comparison universally intrudes? On patronage night our musician was taken sick, so I had to hunt the neighborhood for accompaniment, or at least entr'acte music, but it was a failure. The janitor of the theatre, however, informed me that he could get a fiddler over from the "island," and he would have him there for rehearsal an hour before commencing the performance. He did. He was ancient. He had a fiddle. We reduced the programme to simplicity. He struggled hard for one vocalist over "Scots wha hae," and "John Anderson, my Joe," and for another "Caller Herrin," etc., each of whom were willing to accept any accompaniment to save closing the house. When it came to my turn the music was foreign to him. Prelude was necessary. Notes were a luxury unknown to him, so I hummed and whistled the air—failure—tried again—failure! So in despair I said, play prelude of "Caller Herrin" to my song of "Hamlet," and follow me if you can. The dramatic portion was a success, but the lyric? He got mixed and played "Caller Herrin" for the gentleman to sing "John Anderson," gave the lady "John Anderson" for "Caller Herrin," and for me commenced wildly with "Tullochgorum," which, after several scowls from me, he changed to "Scots wha hae." I commenced, "Scots wha hae wi Wallace bled, Scots wha hae wi haggis fed," followed this with jumble of songs and finally got off. I do not think the public appreciated our efforts. All through the evening I used "Scots wha hae" for a refrain, which puts me in mind of Alexander, the Glasgow theatrical manager, a gentleman who placed over the proscenium of his theatre three portraits, Shakespeare and Byron on either side, and Mr. Alexander in the middle. He was eccentric. During the performances at his theatre it was his custom to hum the air of the "Campbells are coming," so one would hear *sotto voce* as follows (varied to suit the exigencies of the situation,)

"The Campbells are coming, oh dear! oh dear!
Ye've a hale in your stocken, ye have! ye have!
I'll fine you on Saturday, I will! I will!
Shake the thunder, Missis Alick, ye Blatherskite"—

continued *ad infinitum*, thus blending harmony, business and spleen. Next day after our performance, one raw Saturday, we waited on "Sir Somebody Ferguson" to return thanks for his patronage. It is customary to do so, and probably receive a handsome donation from the patron. We were ushered in, I made a few remarks and courteously thanked him for his patronage. A voice from an easy chair rasped out: "Did you (snuff) get a good house (snuff)?" "Very bad," quoth I. "Sorry (snuff), so sorry; wish you better (snuff) success on your next visit (snuff). Good morning." I still waited. "Good morning (violent snuff, snuff, snuff)." "Good morning," we dolefully replied, and my Scotch brother in art on retiring added one of the Baillie's lines, "Curse his supple snout," in tones audible to the raw-boned, long-legged noble descendant of a Scotch border cattle thief. On Sabbath day I walked solus from Ayr to Kilmarnock over roads where the cobble stones were prevalent. I noticed the buxom lassies going along the country roads to Kirk with ruddy faces and sparkling "een," robust figure and limbs—limbs well emphasized. Although "in guid attire" they all were barefooted, carrying their shoes in their hands till arrival in town. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander; off went my shoes, but next day my feet were elegantly festooned with blisters.

My Scotch tour didn't vary much, lots of practice but little money, and although a trip to Inverness was a scenic delight, still the management of the theatre was in the hands of probably one of the coolest swindlers ever known. It is related of him that on one occasion the comedian ventured to remonstrate for lack of money. "Money is it, money you want, and the blackberries all ripe?"

I had a short season in towns like Auchtermuchty, Kirkaldy, Arbroath, Perth, and a few months in Dundee, where Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Kean, Everett, Cathcart, etc., came to big business, and a replenished exchequer, and being desirous of reaching nearer home, I accepted an engagement with Miss Marriott at a minor theatre in Liverpool.

Miss Marriott was undoubtedly one of the finest leading ladies ever on the English stage, and at the period I allude to was in her prime, with T. C. King as leading actor, and was then giving performances which would be a credit to the greatest artists. Her season at the "Wells," London, was, despite the facts that she was handicapped by the best natured but the most eccentric of husbands, who always spoke of his wife as "Her," and followed in the wake of the immortal Phelps, was a success, and the Islingtonians swore by her. Her husband at this period had leased the theatre, and she was giving performances outrageously elongated, playing probably "The Love Chase" and "Effie Deans" with a farce sandwiched in, or "Hamlet" and a two act drama in one evening. A woman playing "Hamlet" seems incompatible, but her characterization of the woeful prince was perfection. She had all the traditions, a strong but musical voice, an elegant form, classic face, with an apt delivery of blank verse, and what is more, natural intellect. Years after this I met her in New York, in '69 I think, when she was only making a fair impression in the same role. Her husband, on our meeting in a strange land, was overjoyed. "Have you seen *her* act. But the actors ain't loud enough, and what's the good of a comedian if he can't make them laugh?" I went afterwards with them *en route* under the management of Captain Morton Price. Mr. Edgar, her husband, was supposed to take charge of the front of the theatre, but his English proclivities always remained and he would sacrifice business for them. I was enacting Polonius one evening when Miss Marriott said to me, "Bob is not on the door; when you are killed endeavor to find him." After dressing I rushed out, peered into the saloons fruitlessly, but noting an underground pie shop I stumbled down the steps, and there was the custodian of our interests with a mug of beer and a pie composed of pork or other ingredients. In the most joyous of tones he exclaimed: "Sit down," pointing to the owner of the pie shop, "He's from Bolton (Lancashire)." He did not go back with me to the theatre. This is drifting from the subject, England to America so *revenons a nos moutons*. Whilst in Liverpool I essayed comedy parts in two to three plays nightly and became familiar with the nautical drama and having heard of our manager's abilities therein, I persuaded him to give the public a representation of a drama, the like of which I had

never seen before, entitled "British Bull Dogs." He was the exponent of a burly tar who chawed tobacco, loved a virtuous country maiden, and during the action of play knocked down and otherwise disabled serious villains, comic villains, hypocritical villains and aged villains by the dozen. Then after a bloodthirsty encounter, in which combat swords were used, and occasional double misses were made, varied by undertone remarks, such as "preams, sixes, cross, mind my fingers, eights," culminating in the overthrow of the ruffian and the entrance of two others with swords, who received the ponderous blows and were ultimately prostrated (all this to music), followed by the entrance of two more (supers,) who seized the Herculean tar, but were levelled to the earth by dexterous right and left handers from his fists, and the further appearance of the comic villain who fell bodily defunct from a deadly missile taken from his mouth—a cud of tobacco. Remember this was before Rider Haggard had written his description of Umposlogos. The audience applauded to the echo. However, during rehearsal of this play, which "held the mirror up to nature" so closely, I ventured to ask the star for my part. Don't want any, said he, "Gag" (improvise) her. As rehearsal proceeded I found I was to be author as well as actor, which, I think, I enjoyed more than the audience. During this same engagement I was introduced to what might be denominated a minor theatre classic, viz: Maria Martin, or the murder in the Red Barn, a dish of horrors with which it was supposed every actor was *au fait*. I never saw a book, but with the aid of others contributed my share of comedy to enliven the blood-thirsty strain, and I also contributed a minor classic which I had adapted, entitled "A Voice from the Ocean," which, under many titles, has amused, if not charmed, the sons of toil in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Under the present working of the stage it would be impossible to find a company doing the same business and doing it as well as they did, viz: producing all the legitimate, such as Macbeth, Hamlet, Richelieu, Richard the Third, Lady of Lyons, Merchant of Venice, Lear, etc., alternated with School for Scandal and the Old Comedies, as well as the Hunchback and the Sheridan Knowles School, commingled with Black Eyed Susan, Laid up in Port, and the sea drama, to which must be added as a zest all the Maddison Morton and other farces. This, it is true, gave the actor but little

time for amusement, but it added considerably to the consumption of midnight oil.

I left Liverpool and its surroundings with regret, made a flying visit to Proud Preston, and, as our manager wished me to try it, took an engagement in the heart of the coal region—Wigan. The audiences in the collier district of Lancashire are not characterized by culture, but they possess honest and manly hearts beneath their rough exterior. I have seen the gallery pretty well crowded with ladies, who wore pantaloons—I should say trowsers—their nomenclature being "banks women," *i.e.*, working at the pit's mouth unloading and shipping coal, yet their demeanour was not worse than other females; in fact, as far as attention went, it was better. My popularity was great amongst the colliers on and off the stage, as I never refused to wet my lips in their pot of beer, when requested in their vernacular to "Sup, lad, sup," and, furthermore, it was lengthened by an encounter with a rough miner. Stopping, after the performance, at the tavern designated as "The Shakespeare," a miner, worse for liquor, endeavoured to pick a quarrel with me, which with policy I was trying to avoid, and would have done so had not his wife appeared upon the scene. Wishing to take the monster home, she pleaded with him and received a stinging blow. There is a conventional picture on the stage, which I now realized—that is, I threw the woman into the corner and landed two facers on the man, which drew blood. Mutual grip ensued, and the Lancashire lad commenced to purr me (in the language of the shire) with his boots. A short struggle—I had him on the floor—then lifting him bodily, blinded with anger, I placed him on the fire—it was an open fireplace. I need not say that he did not remain there, but slunk away after his wife, who had vanished in the melee. During my stay here I venture to recall one of many amusing incidents. There was a fair, and during these fairs the theatrical booth is an ordinary visitor. I went one evening and witnessed a performance (slightly abbreviated) of Richard III. by a veritable hunchback—and a miner at that—who gave a vigorous portrait of the character, which, divested of the grotesqueness inseparable to Lancashire dialect, would have given him rank as a tragedian of first grade.

Despite several stellar features—amongst others Phelps—he was Lanky, too, who played "Man of the World," with his essay on

booing, the management gradually looked upon salaries as a luxury, and finally came the day of collapse; and as I was never very provident, left me in chaos as regards funds. My landlady was an aged widow. Amongst others I was the occupant of apartments in her house, the rental of which was her sole support. Coming home after theatre it was ever my custom to smoke a pipe, and nearly every evening I would find the widow, whose face bore innumerable wrinkles, smoking her pipe also in the fireplace. I would often sit down beside her and offer a pipe of my "bird's eye." Then she would make the customary queries regarding business, and then relate the untimely death of her husband, who was suffocated in a mine with many others of his calling. The story was repeated to me probably forty times, yet I always listened with genuine interest and good-nature—luckily for me, as proves the sequel. On the break up of the theatre I was short of funds. I was in debt. My trunk (anglice box) was there. I approached the landlady with fear and trembling—told my story—said I could not pay her debt—and—there's my box, keep it. A tear stood in her eye. Said she: "Tak yer box; ye werena proud; ye smooked yer pipe mony a neet wi' me; but them other play-folk mun leave their boxes; they were proud; they wudna smook wi' me," I thanked her; told her I was going to Oldham, and said good-bye. "Hoo's ye geyn to Owdham?" "Walk," said I. "Nay, lad, theer's five shillings; ride and, stay thee, theer's thrippence for 'bacca on the way." It was the widow's mite, and I repaid it over again.

Oldham had a theatre, the outside of which did not boast of any architectural beauty, and the inside of which was as hard and comfortless as cheapness could make it. It was at the period of which I write managed by twelve gentlemen of musical and other attainments, who were aptly styled the Twelve Apostles, and the business head thoroughly deserved the title of Judas Iscariot. I talked till I was tired for an engagement, and by dint of persuasion, as they had heard I bore a good repute as a dialectician, they gave me a week. I must say I passed as wretched a week as possible. I obtained lodgings—inferior at that. The reader must understand the average actor did not then affect hotels, but hired rooms, bought his own food, or allowed the landlady to do so, and either way hand it to her to be cooked. The amount of tea, sugar, bread, &c., consumed did not de-

pend upon your voracity, but the landlady's veracity. The leading man, William Tullock, was a character. He had mentally swallowed Shakespeare, Knowles, Lytton, Lovel, &c,, as far as his own line of business, or even secondary business, went, and, in addition, knew every melodrama of the conventional type backwards. I was personating "Country Boys" as a feature, and noted that they were going flat in sections. I spoke regretfully to Mr. Tullock of the fact. "All right," says he, "I'll stir them up." He stalked on in various scenes with majestic strides, giving selections from Othello, Courier of Lyons, Massaniello and other heroes with vituperative gestures to the villain. The audience applauded like lunatics, but he helped the dramas, and that was enough. He was an admirable actor in some parts, and his familiarity with stage traditions made him invaluable in provincial theatres, the managers of which, however, did not fully recognize his work. This theatre was generally filled by regular enthusiastic playgoers, but there was one undesirable innovation. If an actor did not please his audience, or was outrageously bad, he would probably receive a bouquet of pop bottles.

I now made visits to all the Yorkshire and Lancashire towns, such as Bolton, Wakefield, &c., and having made a little money I leased the Burnley Theatre Royal, which did not succeed. On one occasion there I struck a religious cyclone, which completely paralyzed my efforts. It was an advent of Revivalism. The better class of citizens sympathized with me and deplored that the excitement was ruining my business. There was a vast shed next door to the Theatre, which was crowded nightly with fervent believers and unbelievers. I was arguing the sincerity of the devotees with an actor, an Israelite, but the type of all that was good, just prior to our mutual commencement. The crowd was jamming in next door to repletion, whilst our solitary door-keepers kept watch and ward. "Hold back the curtain for a few minutes," he shouted to the stage manager. "Now come with me and I'll fetch them." He literally dragged me and himself into the vast concourse of religionists. They were just indulging in an opening hymn, which soon finished. Immediately my Jewish friend arose and with stentorian lungs shouted: "Ladies and gentlemen (pause—silence—then whispers, 'another convert!') I am here to-night to inform you that the manager of the theatre (low murmur

of disgust) has determined to open his house free (an ejaculated Ah!), and performance is just going to begin." Yell.—Rush! I never witnessed such a wild stampede to the theatre doors, where the door-keepers presented their bodies to the advancing hosts with the magic word "Tickets!"

The public at once penetrated the sell, and many of them, rather than go back crestfallen, deposited their money and became back-sliders.

CHAPTER V.

COTTONOPOLIS.

Manchester Theatre Royal was at this period indulging in a brief run of "Faust and Marguerite," with, I believe, Walter Montgomery as the "Mephistopheles," but for some reason unknown, the engagement was abbreviated. Having acquired a fair Lancashire dialect, and bearing a letter from a personal friend, I interviewed the great "Mogul"—Manager Knowles, who, on strong persuasion, gave me one week in "Ticket of Leave Man," and another in "Robin Wildbriar" in a comedy entitled "Extremes," unknown on this side, but yet remarkably effective. I was a new importation with but little *locus standi* professionally, and I noted, as most actors will, under such circumstances, a frigidity amongst my co-workers which did not abate one whit during rehearsal. I was directing my own scenes under stage manager's supervision. The heavy man tried to be obnoxious, and knowing that he was a popular actor in the city, I conceded to all his crotchety notions and stereotyped ideas, but at length patience ceased to be a virtue. I remonstrated, and insisted on my point. After some argument he appealed to the stage manager and threw his part upon the table. Mr. Knowles, the absolute manager, was the owner of marble quarries and other aids to wealth, but knew nothing of the stage, except from a pecuniary standpoint. He chanced to be in the wings. The stage manager stepped up to him and explained the *casus belli*, that is, as near as he could with the manager's utter ignorance of stage-craft. "He won't play the part. eh? All right, set

another man on"—thinking that actors were as numerous as day laborers. I saw the heavy man wince, and knew from hearsay that his meaning and words were final and obvious. I advanced to Mr. Knowles and said quietly, "Excuse me, sir; it's only a matter of petulance in business. He has played the part with another actor and our notions differ, but I will yield to him." "All right," said he, "You are a good natured lad; I'll raise your wages." And he did.

Speaking of my predecessor, Walter Montgomery, I might remark that he was not exactly of the calibre of which tragedians are made, but he was most artistic in his work. His assumption of the coolness which characterizes John Mildmay in "Still Waters Run Deep" was superior to that of the original, Alfred Wigan, whilst I have never seen "The Iron Chest" rise to the dignity of a good play except in his hands. I have heard actors slur at him as a "linen draper's shopman," but if so he had the ease, manner and heart of a gentleman, was an ardent lover of society and much sought after. I remember once when he was under my management at a small Yorkshire Theatre eagerly and nervously awaiting his coming at hour of performance, then the arrival of a carriage at the door with liveried servants and glittering coat of arms, out of which gracefully stepped the actor. Result—Good house. Poor fellow. He married. His wife was Winetta Montague, a most beautiful woman. He enjoyed married life, if I remember rightly, two days, and then committed suicide. As a reader in his day none enjoyed a greater reputation, not even the Rev. E. M. Bellew, who was born to be an actor but missed his calling and became a Reader. In this city for a few years I have remembrances of going from pillar to post, having played at Barney Egan's "The Queen's," also of changing my name and singing Lancashire songs and giving Ed. Waugh's dialect recitations at Langs, Dog and Duck, and other Music Halls. Poor Waugh, the Poet, had the genius and failings of Burns, and was to Lancashire what the Ayrshire Poet was to Scotland. For pure, rough, homely sentiment versified a finer exemplification could not be found. His "Come Whoam to the Childer and Me" I have recited, and seen tears fall from the eyes of those from whom, judging from their exterior and surroundings, none would deem sympathy existed. I first saw in Manchester "Henry Irving." The papers then said that his

mannerisms rendered him totally unfit for an actor, and few would have imagined that he would ever fill the places occupied by Macready, Charles Kean or Phelps. I saw him recently in New York city when standing on Union Square. I, in a tone of banter, said to a friend, "There's my old pal, Irving," I will accost him. I did so, and spoke of "Auld Lang Syne." He smiled with peculiar emphasis. I looked him in the face, and reading his thoughts said quietly, "Oh, I don't want to borrow any money." He laughed outright and said, "Well, you're the first Englishman I've met here that did not—well no—not all—but some—but what can I do for you?" "Two tickets for the gallery." "Boxes," was the answer, "if you want them." "No, I want to see how time has changed you, and I'll be more at home above." I saw him play the "Merchant of Venice," and became fully satisfied that for stage-craft and artistic production of Shakespeare's plays he is *facile princeps*.

CHAPTER VI.

CIRCUITS.

The days of "circuits" has passed, but the York circuit was, even in my memory, a glorious prelude to metropolitan fame, and from its teachings most of the greater lights have benefited. The York circuit comprised Hull, York and Leeds. Then there were other circuits, as Mr. Roxby's, a very punctilious manager, who controlled Scarboro, Shields, &c., and formerly a Southern circuit, &c. Roxby was a particular manager. No man could wear a moustache in his theatre, and a proper proviso, inasmuch as it is an incongruity with certain personages and periods intended to be represented. I passed what was probably the last season of the York circuit, and I believe John L. Pritchard was the last of the managers. He was a tall, classic-looking individual, who had a deep, bass voice and affected the ghost in Hamlet, etc. There was a little too much sameness in his vocal register, which in "ghosts" might not be considered out of place, but with "Romeo" might be considered a little too sepulchral. In this

company I met an American of extravagant tendencies, who could carry out Hamlet's boast, "Nay, thou rantest I'll rant as well as thou," and who bore the sobriquet of "Stars and Stripes." My opening part in the circuit was Toby Twinkle, with J. F. Cathcart, of the Princess', as Stephen in "All that glitters," and then I had to sing between the pieces and finish with the farce of "Loan of a Lover." We changed plays frequently, but every night (as my repertoire of songs was very limited) I sang "The Statty Fair," giving imitations, with an encore of "Barbara Allan," until the manager became disgusted with my absence of vocal variety and substituted between the plays a solo dancer—to my intense delight. I had two warm friends —one the second comedian and the other the prompter. The prompter had two characteristics. One was that he never could follow the text, and the other that he could write his name from the emanations of his knuckles or elsewhere, being a martyr to chalk gout. He was an inveterate retailer of stage stories, and it was only a few weeks ago I saw one of his ancient jokes in *Puck*, fully illustrated; yet, although this story was worn threadbare, he would tell it so quaintly and embellish it so humorously that repetition did not pall upon us. This is a curtailed version of one:

Two actors out of luck, broken down, are walking to Worcester, and arrive *en route* at Gloucester. The shades of night are falling fast—no money—cold weather—no place to sleep—Aha, the theatre says one. They go there; it is closed, but they crawl in through one of the windows and make for the stage. On stage bank and stage bier they prepare for slumber. It is dark as Erebus, and all is quiet in their gloomy retreat. The tragedian sleeps peacefully; in fact, is snoring audibly; comedian is cold and restless. He arises from his bier, ignites a lucifer match and gazes at the scene behind him, technically called a cut wood. A shiver permeates his frame—goes up stage—Aha! I thought so—a dreary forest! No wonder I was cold —then he draws together the two flats representing a chamber, gives grunt of satisfaction, returns to his bier and shortly after slumbers, dreaming of Gothic chambers and baronial halls. This may be denominated "chestnut," but even the expression "chestnut" is a chestnut. I saw an explanation of its derivation, but it was wrong—in part. The saying arose from a famous melodrama, "The Broken

Sword, or the Torrent of the Valley." Therein it occurs in course of dialogue. The old man is endeavouring to tell a story, in which he recurs to the fact that he was sitting underneath a cork tree. Chestnut, interpolates the comedian. Cork. Chestnut, answers comedian. I ought to know; I have heard this story forty times, and it always was a chestnut before. I think the latter line was a gag of mine. Anyway we actors of thirty odd years ago used it in its present acceptation.

Unlike Hull, the theatre in York was small, so was the patronage. In Leeds it was gloomy, so were the audience; but, then, Hull enjoyed the privilege of an extra transient support. We had played Star after Star, and were busily rehearsing the Christmas pantomime, and were getting a little wearied with our work, but the end came sooner than expected. After a dose of Winter's Tale and a farce I had retired to my attic bed-chamber, which was in a building abutting on the theatre (in fact, I could nearly reach across to my dressing room), when I awoke suddenly, seeing fire almost pouring into my face. I jumped into my garments, awoke my best friend, the comedian and clown in perspective, in time to see the temple of Thespis, which had been the receptacle of so much joy and misery to the poor player, levelled to the earth. I looked blankly at my friend. He returned the same look. "The theatre is gone, I am so sorry," said I. "So am I," said he. Then suddenly, in tones of exaggerated quasi-sorrowfulness, he exclaimed: "Great Cæsar, my new Blue Shape (Shakespearian coat) is burnt to death." After the fire I never saw him more, but I read of his death some few years later. He was Boleno Marsh, the clown, and died at Sadler's Wells during the run of the pantomime. Cause, use of chemical flake white as a cosmetic paint, at least coroner's jury brought it in so. It may be from the use of these paints, as in the case of G. L. Fox, who first suffered from paralysis of the facial muscles, and, again, grease paints, may be one of the factors which has placed so many actors in lunatic asylums.

CHAPTER VII.

HOME AGAIN.

After the Hull fire I felt somewhat discouraged, and a trip to Hamburg for two weeks in a concert garden with its German peculiarities (although it is the most cosmopolitan city I have met) did not add to my love of the profession, so I wrote home to my father like the Prodigal Son, which I was, to all intents and purposes. I received a reply, "Come home." I went, was received into the fold once more, and commenced life anew in trade, and dropping the memories of Bob Acres, Tony Lumpkins and other creations, I turned by attention to pig iron (hematite and melters), puddled bars, sheet and boiler plate. But, like the tiger, I had tasted blood, and the comic muse was not dead but sleeping. Money with me was plentiful, and I became a kind of a dramatic Moecenas. I had a home, and all sorts and conditions of stage men and women found welcome. I became a chronic *habitue* of the theatres, and if funds were lacking I was always ready with my purse to assist them. This was at Birmingham, and many were the happy dinners and Sunday reunions. During this period I made friends with Buckstone, John Brougham, Swansborough, Miss Glyn, and all the stellar lights. Whilst in company with genial people we would take a drag and drive over to Stratford-upon-Avon, the actors' Mecca. There I recall one Sabbath a glorious assemblage of actors and actresses with John Brougham as the chairman, when we lived one happy day, and listened with feelings of admiration to our genial chairman deliver an ode on the great poet, of which I remember only the first couplet,

> "What shall his crown be?
> Not the laurel which decks the warrior's brow,"

but the rest of which breathed poetry in every syllable. During my commercial career of some two or three years it was customary to spend my holidays with the actors. A comedian whom I almost loved, named Maskell, I would visit and back his enterprises at the summer resorts such as Devonport and Weymouth, where I also would act when necessary or when it was my humour. At Devonport we had as

good a company as one would wish, amongst them being Mrs. Robertson (mother of Tom. Robertson, the author), her daughter Madge, now Mrs. Kendall, Bessie Harding, Sidney Bancroft, and others. We produced Kenilworth burlesque for one special feature when the present female head of the dramatic world figured in the pristine delights of exaggerated verse, bad puns, song and dance. Their salaries were low—very low—but they had to live through summer, and the sea air was bracing and it was a real gain in health and pocket. Actors' necessities know no law. As I once remarked to a parish priest who had interdicted and forbidden his people to visit us during Lent, "Father, it may be religiously and radically wrong to give performances in Lent, but remember, oh pater, the actors must have money to buy fish." Again, I would sometimes assist managers in their efforts and sometimes burnt my fingers. "The Lyceum Theatre Co'y," of London, I tided over a financial crisis, and amongst them were Widdicomb (a comedian *par excellence*), John Broughan, Mrs. Brougham, Mrs. Honnor, who had been the original Susan in "Black-eyed Susan," MacIntyre, for whom I embodied an adaptation of Dickens' "Mutual Friend," and who afterwards made a hit in London in the character. I also made a pilgrimage with two distinguished amateurs for a few nights, viz: Capt. Disney Roebuck and Montague Williams, (now the most respected Police Magistrate in the city of London), playing "Honeymoon" and "Retribution." My first view of East Lynne was about this time, when I saw Miss Avonia Jones, an American actress, essay the lachrymose role. The piece failed owing to bad construction and too frequent appeals to the deity. Another American, Miss Macready, appeared, and I assisted in the production of a miserable melodrama entitled "The Child Stealer," which Miss Lucille Western afterwards played and gave as fine an exhibition of a drunken woman as could be conceived, which recalls also a memory of an earlier date, viz: "Adah Isaacs Menken." I have retrospective vision of a magnificent female upon the head of whom was a hat to which the present head-dress is baby-like in proportion, flowing garments, and a carriage and pair with sleigh bells (rather an anomaly) upon the horses, which drew more attention than a circus. Her Mazeppa was the success of the hour, yet, being honored with an introduction to her, I may safely say it was not her talent but her personal charms, her beautiful figure

and magnetic manner that allured wiser men than I, such as Dickens, Dumas, &c.

Since that time I have enacted with many Mazeppas, Kate Fisher, Leo Hudson, Fanny Louise Buckingham, Bob Miles and many others. For several weeks John Brougham lived at my house during an attack of gout, and wrote during that period a drama entitled "The Iron Town." The plot had a suspicion of a drama I saw at the "Porte St. Martin." It was placed under rehearsal, but in a fit of petulance the actor author tore it into fragments and threw it upon the stage. I heard afterwards that the property man gathered up the fragments, fixed it together, some time after sold it, and the play is now doing duty under some sensational title on the road. Some of his productions have the ring of legitimate comedy, notably "Playing With Fire," "Flies in the Web," etc If, as Dr. Johnson says, the man who will make a pun will pick a pocket, then John Brougham's burlesque of "Pocahontas" would convict him as chief of pickpockets. His speeches between the acts were a feature in New York and elsewhere, and they were delivered in a manner giving the idea that they were extempore, but not so. They were sparkling with native wit and were the result of study—and that study was to cover the fact that they were studied. Poor John, he died in New York some eight years ago. I was a day too late for his funeral. Another of my personal friends was "Charles Dillon." No actor I have as yet seen had the emotional power of this man, although the ablest critics said he lacked in intellectual gifts. In his "Belphegor" I have seen audiences, male and female, give vent to tears, and yet the dramatic vehicle used by him was barren of literary merit. As the deserted husband—his grief from the moment of half bewildered apprehension of the loss of his wife to the full agony of its realization, was not only rendered with force but with most delicate and subtle touches. As he makes his exit from his abandoned room, with sunken frame, feeble of limb, with the semblance of mute despair upon his face, yet divested of violence, he showed the finest traits of tragic intensity. There was one peculiarity in this actor's performance of this play that you could count on people seeing it, not only once but thrice or more. He was not so happy in the greater creations of Shakespeare, although his "Hamlet" had novel innovations which

pleased the public. In characters calling for manly pathos he never had a superior, as witness his impersonation of the English yeoman in a "Hard Struggle." He died poor in 1880. During this period of happiness I had the misfortune to lose him who had been the most indulgent of fathers. Shortly after my business affairs became involved, owing to the collapse of a big banking institution, so casting commerce to the four winds of heaven I determined for the future to cast my fortunes once more with the Players, for which former associations had given me a predilection.

CHAPTER VIII.

MANAGING IN ENGLAND.

Walking up the Strand, after an enforced holiday, as I was uncertain as to future, I met an old friend, Belford, of the Strand Theatre, to whom I confided my position. He then informed me that a manager, named Thorne (father of Tom Thorne, Sarah, and a long list of other Thornes), was desirous of letting his theatre in Margate (the cockney's favorite watering place), and, taking his advice, I wrote to him and became the lessee of the Theatre Royal.

It was as pleasant a summer as could reasonably be desired. I owned a donkey, had vested rights in a bathing machine (why don't they introduce them in America?) and, to add to my delight, had an agreeable *dramatis personæ*, besides the society of many friends, such as Talfourd, son of the author of Ion, and many other congenial celebrities, who made Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate their summer homes.

In that little theatre, on Addington street, appeared many stellar features, including Barry Sullivan, fresh from the antipodes, John L. Toole, who had with him as an advertising medium his brother, "Toole the Toastmaster," he of the stentorian lungs; also the pet of the music halls, J. G. Forde, whose forte was an invention of his own called "Patter Vocalism," in which he was undoubtedly funny. I had opposition, to be sure, for there was the "Hall by the Sea," where

Levy, the cornettist, and other features appeared nightly, but still we held our own. Our patrons were, some of them, very peculiar—one in particular, an aged East Indian nabob, who had some calamity with his jaw, or roof of his mouth, I don't know which, but it necessitated the constant attendance of a nurse. My wife was then a great favourite with him as an actress. He would invite us to dinners, which were silent as far as he was concerned, and when I put up her name for a benefit he sent for me. Then the nurse asked me the capacity of the upper boxes. I told her, and then awaited with surprise the old man's proceedings—he handed me a cheque for the full amount. When the night came gallery and rest of house were full, but only one solitary man and his nurse stalked around the upper boxes. He had bought that tier for the evening and not a soul would he allow to enter—thus showing his appreciation. Hodge, a name that used to figure on all the London gin palaces—Hodge's gin—was another peculiar figure. Like Royalty one could tell when he was at home on the terrace, as the flag would be hoisted. He spent money liberally and was the sly butt of the townspeople, who often practised jokes at his expense. At one picnic the school children enjoyed his hospitality, and the donor of the feast made a speech eulogistic of himself, after which a schoolmaster delivered an address of thanks. He had instructed and rehearsed the little ones to repeat the name of Mr. Hodges—at all his "queries." Who is the greatest man in Margate? Yelling chorus of children, "Mr. Hodges." Whose liberality do we now enjoy? "Mr. Hodges." Who deserves our cheers? *Da capo*, "Mr. Hodges." Pause. Some wit from the outside shouted. Who is the biggest fool in Margate? Forte chorus from children, "Mr. Hodges." Everything that he did was of this ostentatious character. He paid for his whistle and occasionally for a benefit, he would play *en amateur* a solo on the flute to the delight of a guying audience. And then there was a gala day, or rather two days, the Margate races, which brought Mike Goodman, the betting man, to the front. He was a gentleman from Jerusalem (Petticoat Lane), who had an idea that he was an actor. He bought the house from me for one night at an enormous sum for the express purpose of exhibiting his talents in the "Jew that Shakespeare drew"—"Shylock." An immense house ensued. For

the character of Tuabal, the other Jew, I had arranged a double, as I expected another actor whom I had engaged would not arrive on time, anyway to rehearse. His name was Daniels. He arrived just in time to appear, made his entrance to the star, who gazed a moment in wonder, then in audible tones exclaimed, "Another Sheeny." The play was guyed throughout, and, during the trial scene Mike, who kept on undisturbed, was cheered on by betting men, who, in the cries of the fraternity, shouted, "Five to one on Mike." "Bar one." "Get on to the scales." "Where's the Pig-skin," etc., etc., terminating in a rather abrupt fall of the curtain. After all was over the star never grumbled, but jingled his bright sovereigns in his pocket, and with them for a consolation he never sighed after the Shakespearian pound of flesh. I had a small source of income in this theatre from talented amateurs. There was in the Metropolis a dramatic agent named Danvers, a small comedian with the largest of families, who would occasionally forward me amateurs with this kind of message: "Enclosed find ——— pounds. Give bearer a chance. If useful keep her and pay her small salary; if useless, discharge." In this and other manner appeared for first time in this dingy theatre various individuals who have since imparted lustre to the stage, amongst them Miss Eveleigh—also Miss (then) Lilian Neilson, (since Adelaide Neilson), whom I afterwards saw in the "Huguenot Captain" and later on as "Juliet")—Miss Weathersby and others. I have an indistinct remembrance of one aged fairy, who was angular, thin, wiry in voice tone and figure, who informed me that she was desirous of playing a few nights to familiarize her with the stage. I thought one would be more than enough, but with policy told her that I was afraid it was impossible, as our engagements were numerous. She was pertinaciously determined. I then artfully explained that money might bridge over the difficulty, and named a sum sufficient, as I thought, to dampen her ardour. *Tont au contraire.* She never hesitated, but said money would be forthcoming, and so it was. After considerable persuasion she was induced to play "Loan of a Lover" instead of "The Honeymoon," which she aspired to. We rehearsed three days, and inwardly I chuckled. At night, attired in the garments of a Dutch peasant, and endeavoring to put on the vraisemblance of youth, she trotted down to the footlights. The gallery

giggled, but they bore it. She twisted, twirled, ogled and flirted, endeavoring, as Yankees say, to be "cute," but when she commenced her song,

"I don't think I'm ugly—
I'm only just twenty,"

a stentorian voice from the gallery yelled, "Get off; you're eighty if you're a day," and thus abruptly terminated the performance. These are the people from whom tricky agents make occasional harvests. There are always feminine and masculine zealots of all ages who are ready to sacrifice their purses to their vanity, and for whom ridicule is the sole cure. Still my summer season was a success, and I left this, which is one of the prettiest sea-coasts of England, with poignant feelings of regret.

CHAPTER IX.

MANY CHANGES.

After leaving Margate I had the pleasure of meeting Dion Boucicault, the greatest master of stage effect of his time, and was engaged by him for a short season of Irish drama in Dublin. He was not only an admirable comedian, but linguist, manager and author. As the latter he has been denounced as a pirate, and was mercilessly scathed on occasions by the critics. However, I obtained his hearty recognition by an article I contributed to a magazine, in which, after defending his undoubted skill as a dramatist, I ventured to add that like his great predecessor, Shakespeare, "quod tetigit ornavit," and that in a like degree the greatest of our dramatists had been indebted to others for many of his plots and yet no one dared to asperse his genius. "Colleen Bawn," founded on Gerald Griffin's story of "The Collegians," fell flat as a stage production, but the facile pen of Boucicault made it almost a classic and saved the fortunes of many a manager. The same might be said of almost all his productions. Their foundation was patent, but he put the life into them, and they

still live. To London Assurance (which others claim) he had infused most of the spirit. "Arrah na Pogue," "Formosa," "After Dark," "Grimaldi," (in which as a French *emigre* his dialect was perfection and acting delicious,) "Octoroon," and many others, are evidences of his skill, and no one who has witnessed his acting can forget an "Irishman," which was not an exaggeration, but had the savour of his native bog. In all his writings there is a simplicity and approach to nature, whilst his conception of character was unique, as witness "Old Nat Gosling," and the betting fraternity in "Flying Scud." They are o truth " the chronicles and brief abstract of their time."

Some of the readers of this may remember the Strand Theatre, London, where I played an engagement, brief as it was, with Mrs. Swanborough. The Swanboroughs were an elegant and intellectual family, if we kindly except the old lady (the father committed suicide), but she was a woman with a big heart, whose malapropoisms in real life were numerous. *On dit* that she informed the equerry of the Prince of Wales on one occasion that she had built a *spinal* staircase specially to the royal box. Miss, *par excellence*, Swanborough was in her day a most ladylike, magnetic actress, and her sister-in-law was a pretty and fascinating lady, whilst in their company were Elise Holt and others of the burlesque school, and the comedy element in this Bandbox was always strong. Who can forget Rogers, the eccentric comedian, kind, charitable and beloved by all. Poor fellow! He suffered much, and his last words on earth were, like himself, full of character: "Thank heaven, the little raffle is over." Then there was Jimmy Stoyle, a diminutive man with a bass voice, whose peculiarities off the stage were hunting old curiosity shops for Van Dykes and Rembrandts, and who would go 500 miles to wade for brook trout, and William and Arthur Swanborough, princes of good fellows. This was the home of burlesque. A short time prior to this I had visited Bermingham with the greatest actor to my poor idea who ever lived, and to whom, if any one ever deserved the title, should be prefixed "Original" in big type. He conceived a new school, invented a new style, and permeated it with his own identity. Poor Fred Robson! His short stature had forbidden his assumption of tragedy, for which he was pre-eminently adapted. So his tragic powers were brought into use as a comedian. His wonderful transitions from the highest tra.

gedy to low comedy were the "one step from the sublime to the ridiculous," and thus he founded a new school, "The Robsonian," which, although Toole and others have endeavoured to imitate, they but do so weakly. In "Medea" his horrible earnestness and tragic delivery of one episode, "The way the cat jumps upon the unsuspecting mouse," the descriptive acting of the speech as he proceeds, and when one is almost appalled by his terribly graphic recital, the sudden comic finish of "scrunches and eats him" gained him the applause of the queen of tragedy, Ristori, of whom he was then the burlesque imitator. His "Yellow Dwarf," "Mazeppa," and all the travestied creations had this characteristic. But in assumptions of modern life he was equally as earnest. In "Porter's Knot," "Daddy Hardacre," *et hoc genus omne*, there was the same blending of pathos and bathos, which caught mingled tears and honest laughter, and yet I have seen audiences roar at his farces, of which there has never yet been a counterpart. Poor fellow, he died when only 43 years old, at, I think, the end of 1864. If I remember rightly, the modern Miss Farren was also in his company at the Olympic, and, as far as I can remember her, even then played in a jaunty, easy, captivating manner. I was in little later days a friend of Robson's son, who was a fair comedian, but of whose future I never knew, and at the same time met Bob Raynham, the original "Sam" in "Ticket-of-Leave," and Henry Neville, then a London favourite, and one whose fame time has not yet dimmed, and Miss Terry, not forgetting also Lydia Thompson, whose dancing and chic in "Magic Toys," were delighting all London. About this time I became a scribe for *Entracte* and other papers, and visited in course of time most of the theatres from Her Majesty's to the "Royal Dusthole," which latter was budding into unforseen glories as Marie Wilton's (Mrs. Bancroft), and witnessed the triumphs of the Robertsonian period, "Caste," "Ours," "Society M.P.," &c., and many a happy night have we spent at the Somerset, Strand with poor George Honey, a comedian who was, if one may use the term, a creator, inasmuch as he could invent business and gag with the best of them, and W. J. Florence, beloved in two hemispheres, and all the *bon ton* in dramatic art. The next time I saw Florence was in New York, when Wallack and he were litigating over the rights to "Caste," and when Florence swore that he played the piece from memory, thus

evading Wallack's claim. I could not help remarking "Lord keep thy memory green."

I had omitted to mention that it was also my privilege to accompany E. L. Sothern on his tour to Paris, which proved a disastrous failure, but I had the opportunity of visiting the Academie Francaise, Porte St. Martin, and other theatres, giving me a brief insight into French methods, although they do not vary to my eye much from our own. Sothern's "Dundreary" was always ultra farcical to my thinking. I preferred his "David Garrick," for it possessed an admixture of tragedy and comedy, and although droll and effective in the scene in which he endeavors to take off the enchantment of the stage by assuming the excesses of a drunkard, yet there was real feeling in his sense of the humiliation he inflicts upon himself to save the girl who loves him. His acting in all he did else was that of an eccentric humorist, and off the stage his weakness was to be thought of a similar character. One anecdote, which may be familiar, but is true, I venture to give. He visited a flourishing undertaker and gave an order on the most elaborate scale for all that was necessary for a funeral. The undertaker's preparations had not gone far before he reappeared with great earnestness to enquire as to their progression, and after a brief interval reappeared with anxiety depicted on his face to enquire when he could have possession of the body? The undertaker was naturally bewildered. Of course you provide the body, said the comedian, endeavoring to enlighten him. "The body," gulped out the amazed undertaker. Why, do you not say, said Sothern, exhibiting the card of the shop, "All things necessary for funerals amply supplied." I do. "Well, is not a body the first thing necessary?" This was a type of his peculiar humor which loved to bring into startling juxtaposition the grave and grotesque. He died in '81. His son, E. L., who possessed a great deal of his father's ability, I believe died some six years later, whilst another son has some of the father's attributes and is successful in America in "The Highest Bidder," etc. I could dilate on the attractions of my London home and the amusement experiences of the Music Halls, which at this time were launching into prominence with memories of "Stead the Cure," Mackney, who was great in negroes, but his negro was a cockney negro, Sam Cowell, the found-

ers of comic singers, Ross, the type of a cockney thief, and last and least in stature little James Taylor, who sent out a challenge for the championship of comic singers. His vocal portraits of exaggerated Yorkshiremen, silly boys, old women, etc., have been the foundation of the school of entertainers. I was restless, and wishing to try fresh field and pastures new, I packed my valise and a calcium apparatus of gigantic dimensions with a view of embarking with a sea captain, an old friend of mine, to the sunny south, which was then in the height of conflict. The calcium I clung pertinaciously to for some years. My friend, Edward Gomersal, for whose advantage I used it last at the Boston Theatre in the "Naiad Queen," and where a fairy inadvertently stepped upon the rubber tube, thus annihilating the moon and all the lunar affects. Gomersal afterwards lent it to the theatre comique on Washington Street, where it was burnt with the theatre a little after, but as the Panorama lecturer would remark, "Now for America."

CHAPTER X.

COMEDY CONTRASTS.

I would in this chapter, by kind permission of my readers, delay my voyage across the Atlantic by giving an idea of the method of the great comedians who existed at this period, and whose names were then familiar as household words. This, of course, is in the retrospective vein, so anticipating time I will give, as it were, a contrast of the representative comedians then and their followers at the present time.

English comedy, is *de facto* American comedy also, for the legitimate standard comedies have generally had a local habitation and a home in New York, and the present school of comedy affected by the Frohmans and others is but a reflex of it, so having a personal idea of the characteristics of the acknowledged heads of their art, I will proceed to illustrate.

Buckstone, whose society was a pleasure to me, although we did not meet until deafness assailed him, (that malady did not affect his humour), and Compton were both of the Haymarket. Keeley, always to the public "Little Keeley," Harley and Fred Robson make a quintette, and their methods were so apparent that one could see how they never failed to reach the desired results—laughter. Yet they did this by utterly different means, as the same character pourtrayed by these actors would be delineated in a totally different manner.

Buckstone's humour was loud and demonstrative. Prior to his entrance you would generally hear a drawling, almost nasal, voice making some ordinary exclamation, and then would bustle upon the stage a round, plump body, with chubby face, salient with good humour, seeming to say "I'm here and I'm going to make you laugh," and here you have his method. He took his audience into his confidence, appealed to them with comic grimace and gesture, added to furtive nods and winks. The character was always subservient to his purpose. He was always Buckstone, and the public did not wish him to be other. There was no boundary line between comedy and farce. Nature had fitted him with a plastic face, with mouth always on the alert for a grin, which could readily depict drollery, cunning or shrewdness at will. *Tout au contraire* Compton. His humour was neither unctuous nor spontaneous, but rather dry and somewhat forced. Like his co-mate his individuality intruded, but his conception of character was more suggestive. His comedy had no exuberance, but it combined unconscious eccentricity with self-satisfied stolidity. In Shakespearian clowns he was at his best. The first gravedigger in Hamlet in his hands has never had a counterpart. His grave precision when laying down the law, and his humorous grimness in propounding the riddle, "Who is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipright, or the carpenter," was only excelled by the elaborate air of superiority with which he rates his assistant for his dullness. His was the incarnation of a fellow to whom Yorick's skull and dead men's bones "custom had made a property of easiness." The disposition he displayed was that of a man who seemed to thrive better with stoups of liquor, mingled with the savour of mortality. Keeley was unique. Here was a comedian who was not comic. No

other man ever caused so much mirth with so little effort. He was the *vis inertiæ* of comedy—all he had was impassibility and a phlegmatic manner. Take "London Assurance" as a sample. His pliability and utter concession to his wife, Lady Gay, was that of a docile child to his mamma, and self-will seemed so much a stranger that one would not have been surprised to hear him cry to be carried. His *personnel* was a study—stature short, very short, immobile face, bearing a look of Christian resignation, which was, however, non-suited by a decidedly out of proportion Roman nose. Of course, under these circumstances, sameness was a necessity, but it was the sameness of comic drollery, which could and was, varied by the author's skill.

When first introduced to Harley he was at the Princess'. This was a comedian who had not a single characteristic of the others. His impersonations bore the impress of gaiety, wit, vivacity, to which was added a very decided leaning to facial expression. His acting, although occasionally overdone, gave the audience one impression, viz., that of self-enjoyment, which to spectators became contagious. The critics invariably spoke of him as bordering on extravagance, yet his "Touchstone" was quaint with the true Shakesperian flavour, and his "Bottom" in "Midsummer Night's Dream" obtained Charles Kean's heartiest endorsation. Fred Robson, of whose attributes we have before spoken, was the comic genius of his time, and still his comedy differed from all others, inasmuch as his was the comedy of tragedy. He could draw tears from the poorest material, and his greatest efforts were achieved when depicting the mingled joys and sorrows in the humble walks of life. It was tragedy leavened with comedy, and even in burlesque his transitions from the grandest perorations to the most commonplace climax were the perfection of art. Then his local colouring was perfect, even in farces like "Hush Money," "Boots at the Swan," &c. These were the masters of their art, although one might be added in Wright, who, however, was always spoken of as a firm—Wright and Bedford. He was a comedian who might be termed funny. For character painting he had little need, although some of his impersonations were stamped by nature, such as "Cheap John," "Haunted Man," and several others of the Adelphi drama. His was occasional buffoonery, marred by broadness, but no comedian was more beloved, in a theatre, which had for pre-

siding geniuses, Benjamin Webster, who was one of the finest of artists; O. Smith, founder of the conventional School of Villain; Madame Celeste, an anomaly in some respects, as she gave her portraits with French dialect, but always picturesque, earnest and attractive; and, last not least, queens of comedy, Miss Woolgar and Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

The comedians of the present day have not improved upon the teachings of these philosophers of laughter, and in all their followers there is apparent the same methods—if anything in a more diminished form. Even Mr. Toole, who is recognized as the successor of these great men in "Cockaigne," has not shown the peculiar delicacy of wit which characterized the humor of his predecessors. His comedy is broad and farcical, and his chief reliance has been the repetition of some gag line, as "Oh it does make me so wild," which he interpolates sometimes *ad nauseam*, whilst in the serio-comic line, which he copies from Roboon, one must necessarily admit that the mantle of that immortal genius has not fallen upon him. Thorne and James have reminiscences of Wright in their treatment, but of the present race of comedians, circumstances have made their existence as representative in art more difficult. In America the nearest approach to these representative comedians is found in James Lewis, who never altogether sacrifices the character but who endeavors to give the comic idiosyncracies of human nature, and never descends to that buffoonery which is sometimes called farce comedy. Formerly it was called horse play. Did that designation arise from "grinning through a horse collar?" Mr. Jefferson, in a similar degree, is not a farceur, but he depicts the lights and shades of genuine comedy with an ease and absence of effort which constant familiarity with the stage has made the semblance of reality. Buckstone and Jefferson made "Lend Me Five Shillings" a laughing success, but the work of these two humorists in the same play differs as night and day, yet each rendition was in a like degree the embodiment of fun. I cannot call to mind another actor, not even "Stuart Robson," a most clever comedian, who does not rely on personal peculiarities more than realization of character. Of course these are comedians who have made enormous successes, such as Emmett, Samuel of Posen, Ole Oleson, etc., but these are not what might be designated legitimate comedians.

CHAPTER XI.

AMERICA.

My first impression of America was taken from a very indifferent standpoint, Wilmington, N.C., as that city is not built on architectural lines, and the climate is as variable as a woman in love. As this is merely a series of somewhat disconnected dramatic memories, we will call a vacuum here, making as it were an undisclosed interregnum, and hasten on by immediate stage to the stage of Richmond, Va., and a few of its reminiscences.

Richmond, as I saw her then, was a sleepy looking country town as far as business went, but taken from the point of view of nature, as beautiful a city of hills with diversified scenery as any artist could long for. Times have changed its aspect, and now there is a resemblance of Birmingham or Pittsburgh. Then we had the old-fashioned type of a southern hotel, the Powhattan, whilst the Spotswood was the nucleus of a new era. The latter recalls memories of dread fire and disaster, whilst the latter has given way to the march of improvement. Mrs. Magill, who only died a short year ago, was the representative of Richmond managerial cares for many years, and besides being a handsome woman was shrewd and business-like. There is conjured up memories of the Partington sisters, one of whom was, as a dancer, the perfection of grace, and another of whom (now living) has drifted into the antics of Topsy, and D'Orsay Ogden, who thought he could do justice to Macbeth (an opinion unfortunately not shared by the public), and Mrs. Leary, a sister of Mrs. Magill, a woman of gigantic stature, who was always kind and generous, and who, after dressing hundreds of dramatic aspirants, has found comfort in religion. Then, at a later date, I see visions of Anna Levering, who is still "in the flesh," a fine sample of womanhood, and W. S. Higgins, who at a later date was yclept "tack hammer," as it was said he carried one of those weapons, and armed therewith would sally forth accompanied by a few handbills to capture the opening of small halls, whilst later on Marsden, the author of Clouds, &c., was essaying, with but small success, to act. Poor fellow; as a dramatist years later he became rich, but through the imagination that his daughter was going to the bad, being of an ultra sensitive nature, he committed suicide. Then who

can forget Will Otis, who affected the Lord Dundreary line of business, and who boasted of a collection of thirty pairs of pantaloons, each of which bore a cognomen, such as "Moonlight on the Lake," "Shimmer of the Morning," "In the Gloaming," etc. He was a favorite of Laura Keene's, and a thoroughly manly fellow withal, and *on dit* that he invariably said a short prayer at the wings on making his first entrance. It was there I first saw "Charlotte Thompson," daughter of Lysander, the dialectician, and with whom my son made his first appearance in "East Lynne." The boy knew his lines but did not wish to go on and commenced to cry. The application of my boot landed him with howls at Miss Thompson's feet, but he suddenly recovered and went on with the performance until the bed scene, when with tones of mingled disgust and ultra bass he growled out, "Madame Vine, when shall I die?" which caught a laugh that was increased still further by his sticking out a pair of high boots from underneath the sheets. I played for the first time in America in that theatre Caste (Eccles)—Dora —(Farmer Allan) and the comedy roles in Robertson's productions. Three years after the war I returned to Richmond and leased the Virginia Hall to which I gave the name of the Bijou Theatre (first of the name, but since industriously copied) and tried to run the same as a stock theatre.

We had a line on the bill, "no niggers admitted." The nomenclature is changed to colored people now-a-days. Our efforts failed, and those who had promised me help and patronage were conspicuous by their absence, so after a short season, jaundiced and disgusted, I one evening appeared before the curtain and delivered myself thus:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—As a manager here I am a failure. I have been promised all sorts of help and it has not come. I may say in addition that, on this occasion I have been three months with you and have heard nothing but boasts of southern chivalry, but I have hunted in every hole and corner of Richmond and—and I can't find it."

This brought down the house, and I left town. I have visited the city several times since, with the Holman Opera Co., Alice Oates, and my own company, and they have always remembered me kindly; the press have never failed to give me their suffrages—and they have even gone so far as to head the preliminary notice of my arrival with the magic words, "Hurrah for Dixie."

CHAPTER XII.

UNCLE TOM—EDWIN FORREST.

Shortly after the war I left Richmond for Norfolk, and played two weeks with George Kunkel, who since became known as the Uncle Tom, but cash was short and I took boat for the actors' mart, New York, and landed there with about five cents. An actor's life is very varied, but it grows monotonous in some respects, although his experience may vary between New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and the great West. I was debating in New York as to futurity, when by chance I met at an actors' resort the originators of what has proved the salvation of many struggling managers, and which has made more actors than any other medium. I mean Mr. G. C. Howard, whose wife was the original Topsy. There may be Topsy, or double Topsys, but this was the Topsy that Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe drew. I have enacted in that fearfully incongruous drama most of the males. I drew upon myself the anger of the star by being the first to introduce the present imbecile characteristics of Marks. I have vainly therein endeavored to portray successfully two individuals with two dialects—Cute (Yankee), Phineas (Kentucky)—and have made Uncle Tom too humorous to the annoyance of several managers. In Cincinnati, when playing the usual double, I took a walk after rehearsal over the bridge to Covington, Kentucky. Kentucky, here was the dialect I was hunting for. I saw the manager coming in the opposite direction. Here was my chance; out went my tongue. The manager met me, looked thunderstruck, thinking I was insane, and in the blandest tones enquired, "Lindley, what on earth is the matter?" "Hush," I replied, "Don't stop me, I am catching Kentucky dialect." In this same company was Tom Keene, the tragedian, then a young and boisterous but good-hearted fellow, and John Nunan and Mrs. Thos. Donelly. As stage manager I allowed Mrs. D., who was playing Aunt Ophelia, to sing "Away Down in Maine," when Mr. Howard came to me with horrified look and exclaimed, "Sing a song in Ophelia—It will be said Mrs. Howard allowed it and will be taken for a precedent." What a change to present times when dogs, shouters, jubilee singers, double Evas and other impossibilities are thrown in pell mell. The duties of a stage

manager were all important in these days, his will being law, and a knowledge of the ordinary run of legitimate and other plays was absolutely necessary. Now, with the exception of a few stock theatres, his vocation is almost on the level of a stage carpenter. Some of these gentlemen ruled with an iron hand, and I call to mind when the use and abuse of fines was an ordinary occurrence. There was one of that ilk in Albany, N.Y., whose dictum was in case of slightest negligence, "Fine him" or her as the case may be. On one occasion sickness was very rife. He got soured on many changes, and at last it was "Fine him, this sickness has got to be stopped." One morning at rehearsal the prompter came with sorrowful face and said, "Mr. So-and-So, an important actor, is dead." "Dead," said the irritable manager, "Fine him, this dying has got to be stopped." But to return to the Howards. Mrs. Howard was not only the absolute type of Topsy, but although a Yankee she gave the nearest approach to Dickens' "Nancy Sikes" of any I have seen, (not excluding Lucille Western), whilst in the same cast we had Little Ella Chapman, an ideal "Oliver." Having fulfilled their bookings returned to the city, where being inveigled into an agent's office proprietor queried, "Do you want a sit?" Answering in the affirmative I was introduced to a manager who bore the prefix of doctor. He was tall and imposing enough to carry the title; his clothing was elaborately adorned with fur, and upon a manly and white shirted breast reposed a metaphorical lighthouse of precious stones from Golconda—or the glass works. He was diffuse in language, and finally I engaged with him as a member of the Broadway Theatre Co. (peripatetic), which to other novelties had a brass band attachment. We perambulated New York State producing "The Octoroon," and other plays in a *laisser aller* manner, but meeting another gang (that's what the ordinary public denominated us) of troopers, I had the pleasure of retiring and joining for a short time the tragedian of his age, Mr. Edwin Forrest, than whom no other actor ever thought more of his fellow workers of the *ars dramatica*. When I met him he was getting old, gouty and grumpish, but the poetic fire was there. His first salutation was: "You're English?" "Yes, sir," was the answer. "What theatre did you last play in there?" "Sheffield," was the reply. "Sheffield (with a growl), well, you're the first Englishman

I've met over here who did not hail from Drury Lane." He has often said: "My three antipathies are England, the gout and my wife." With his endeavors to hide the pain of the gout he could still be sarcastic. One English actor playing seconds was, at rehearsal, a constant thorn in his side—by his querulous objections. When requested to cross the stage, or other minor detail, he would break in with the remark, "I played this, with some celebrated actor and I was over there." This the star bore patiently for several times, but the explosion was near at hand. Forrest remarked to him: "What is your authority for that?" (alluding to some stage business). The actor testily remarked: "I played this with Ira Aldridge." "Who's he?" answered the star. "The African Roscius," was the reply. "Aha," he thundered, "I thought you had been playing with some d—d nigger." When he died he left a monument behind him in the "Forrest Home," which is situated near Philadelphia. A mansion surrounded by grassy acres full of beautiful trees and varied by hill and valley, which contains therein a collection of unique portraits, statues and dramatic curiosities, a library full and perfect with scarce folios of the immortal bard, is now a haven of rest to aged members of the profession who are debarred of nothing that ordinary wishes might desire. On my last visit, a year or so ago, there were several I had known, amongst them Frank Lawlor, and Simcoe Lee, who, by-the-bye, is, I think, a Canadian. The latter said to me, Harry, here I am, a millionaire—the table groans with good things—my room is my own—luxuries are not denied me—if I want to smoke tobacco is plentiful—if I want change a carriage bears me to the depot, and money is given me—if I express a wish they try to fulfil it. To-day they have, as I desired, given me a chest of carpenters' tools, as I wanted to work *en amateur*—I have no thought of to-morrow—I do not even tremble as to the important query, "Does the Ghost walk?" There are about twenty inmates who enjoy the—well—we cannot use a better term—the hospitality of the dead tragedian. On leaving it, however, this thought obtruded: This property, if divided into building lots, would bring an enormous sum. Would the spirit of the great actor rebel if it were disposed of and the proceeds used to supply the wants of a much greater number of the fraternity? The city is growing Frankford-way so fast, that I imagine to "that complexion" it will come at last.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN OHIO.

In 1867, after a short sojourn in Gotham, I encountered, one day, a genial Irishman with the Celtic name of Barney Dugan, whose first salutation was, "I want you as stage manager and start at once to Canton." I had an inward misgiving that he was endeavouring to chaff me, as I thought China a little beyond my reach, but after a time on my enquiring its precise locality, he added Ohio. So with but little hesitation I accepted. On arrival there I found an incomplete theatre, but the prospects seemed bright and in the company I saw good material. Rachel Denvil, the leading lady, bore with her traces of the Old Bowery, but she had the physique, voice and intelligence denied to many others, whilst Mortimer Murdoch (author of "Hoop of Gold") was a thoroughly efficient tragedian. T. W. Keene (our representative Richard III. of later days), Johnny Ward, John Nunan, Southard and others made a good coterie, and during six weeks to full houses we gave admirable performances of tragedy, comedy and lurid melodrama. I had omitted to mention Mrs. Denvil's daughter, who was sweetly sympathetic in light *roles*, besides being the possessor of good vocal ability. Her singing was a feature and made such an impression that one of our distinguished patrons on an occasion bought twelve orchestra seats specially to hear her vocalize. The play was "Othello," the vocalist Desdemona, and Desdemona, except in opera, does not indulge in chanson. The patron, accompanied by Louis Schaeffer (the owner of the opera house, which was then a new toy to him,) came with the extraordinary request that she should sing a popular song, "Constantinople," in the tragedy. I remonstrated about the incongruity, remarked that we were playing Shakespeare, and received for an answer, "Shakespeare never wrote a comic song that pleased him as well," etc., etc. So she sang "Constantinople" in the character of Desdemona. Recalling Louis Schaeffer brings before me a peculiar experience with him in the same house twenty years later. My own company was playing for a week strong dramas of the Wild West character. One of the local dailies had not been prolific of notices, so when the reporter came to witness the performance he was refused admission

with the remark that if the show was not good enough for longer critiques it was not good enough for him to see it. The irate critic next morning gave a most damnatory and unjust notice of the company. Schaeffer, full of indignation, read the article and said: "Wait till night, me fix him." Night came with "The Phœnix" as the bill of fare. Between the acts on stalked a lean spectacled figure with carpet slippers on feet and skull cap on head. Shouts greeted his entry. He commenced: "Ladies and Gentlemen,—Perhaps a few of you can read. Do you read dot newspaper? Dey say dis company not good. I say dem reporters is liars. You have seen Gerald Blossoms, who was mein friend Mr. Lindley. Twenty years ago he opened dis house mit Thomas Keene, Mr. Murtogh, Clara Morris, Rashel Deuvil and some more of dose fellows. Look how they please to-night? You see that lady sing, I don't know her other name. You hear that Jew; well, he was a Jew, and he's not ashamed of me (cheers). I run this house; the show please myself; I gif gut performance, and if dot reporter don't like my shows he does not gif a d—n." Terrible applause, after which he, excited, made the remark, "I told you me fix him." Poor Louis was, with all his eccentricities, a friend of the profession, and a true Democrat, so much so that he narrowly escaped hanging for his sympathy with the South. We, after our season at Canton, played all the cities of the State, including Columbus, and finally closed for the summer season with regret. I made, however, supplementary trips as a manager, of which more anon

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CHAPTER XIV.

STOCK.

It has often been a matter of contrast—stock performances and the present combination system. In 1868, or thereabouts, I was comedian at the old National Theatre, Cincinnati, which had been managed by Mr. Bates for years previously, but who for this season had put in R. E. J. Miles, and during the period it was star attractions, week by week, who would vary their plays nightly or so. With

Edwin Booth and the legitimate repertoire, such as "Hamlet," "Richard III," "Lady of Lyons," "Much Ado About Nothing," "Richelieu," etc., it was not a matter of much difficulty, but the ordinary run of stars made it real work. Amongst others Mrs. General Lander arrived with heavy imitations of the Ristori drama, such as "Mary Stuart and Queen Elizabeth" (Mrs. Lander was Jean Davenport, and it is said was the original "Infant Phenomenon" of Dickens), and John E. Owens, the character actor of his day and originator of "Solon Shingle," which, although an inferior literary production, is the forerunner of Yankee comedy. Owens was engaged for two weeks of standard comedies, and to my intense disgust the first old man was *hors de combat* with the gout, and, as a sequence, the manager asked me as a favor to play what comedy parts I could, and also the most difficult of the old men, such as in "Paul Pry," etc. Crusty old men—happy old men—senile old men—robust old men—varied with comedy *roles*, rehearsed daily, gave my nights after performance anything but a superfluity of sleep. The second old man in the theatre was a stepson of John Brougham's, by name George Lascelles. If anything disagreeable or unsatisfactory happened his favorite ejaculation would be Tingle! Tingle! music! if an actor was fined, Tingle! Tingle! music! if an unpleasant notice adorned the green room walls, Tingle, &c.; if a star ventilated his or her wrath, Tingle, &c; in a bar-room or other discussion the same old Tingle. In fact, his Tingle! Tingle! music! was the property of the public. He was always uncertain in the text and a veritable *bete noir* to Mr. Owens, whose finest points he would invariably mar. In a farce, "The Live Injun," the comedian was driven completely *distrait* by Mr. Lascelles, and in reply to some query, Mr. Lascelles, at loss for words ejaculated: "Who am I?" Mr. Owens, in unqualified disgust replied: "The worst second old man in the business." As the Irishman in the corner I gently murmured, Tingle! tingle! music! Actors and audience roared to Lascelles' discomforture and utter annihilation for rest of the evening. We also gave support to Joseph Jefferson in "Rip Van Winkle" and other productions, whilst we varied an occasional week with "Midsummer's Nights Dream," "Humpty Dumpty" as spectacular attractions. Then we tried Belle Boyd, "The Confederate Spy," who, in her new calling, failed to

draw, and C. W. Couldock, as Louis XI., an admirable portrait, and Mrs. Scott-Siddons, who was then classically beautiful and would have made an ideal Virginia. With this lady I first essayed to gag (improvise) Shakespearian blank verse. I was playing Cloten in "Cymbeline," and in front scene gave the cue for attendant to enter. I heard a voice say, "Miss Clark can't be found! Gag." I did so to to the best of my ability, and as the wait was somewhat protracted to the tedium of the audience, and I am afraid that if Shakespeare could have heard my lines he would have turned uneasily in his grave—and then after all the star had to come on with the omission of Miss Clark's lines. We also produced by this lady's desire a weird, uncanny dish of horrors, written by a local judge, entitled the "Corsican Sisters," in which, as comedian to fill up unnecessary sticks in in machinery, I made forty-one distinct entrances, and I never blushed for my substitution of the author's lines. There were many other stars, and amongst that company many have joined the great majority. It composed names like Mat Lingham, James O'Neill (the Monte Christo of later days), Joseph Whiting, C. P. DeGroat, the sisters Minnie and Ada Monk, and it may be said it was a gathering of thoroughly efficient workers. I left there for spring season at Detroit, Michigan, when I joined a company which was to open the best theatre that city had ever had. It was located on *Campus Martius*, and under ostensible management of a grotesque Yankee comedian, Garry Hough, who made Cute a funny caricature. In its ranks were Miss Reignolds, whom I had seen at the Haymarket, London, as "Richelieu," at sixteen, also John Brougham, as stock star, Walter Grisdale, a ponderous tragedian of the old school, bristling with traditions, Mr. and Mrs. Claude Hamilton, a delightful couple, Pop Fuller, an antiquarian, Johnson, etc. "London Assurance" was the initial programme, with Brougham as Dazzle, Miss Reignolds as Lady Gay, self as Mark Meddle, and a capable cast, but although we gave the entire round of John Brougham's plays, including the "Burlesques," "Shylock," "Pocahontas," supplemented by the then running New York attractions, we finally cried, "Hold, enough," and the votaries of Thespis were cast adrift.

There were plenty of excuses for our failure, and the one word most distasteful to a manager's ears was indiscriminately used—If.

I have scarcely ever met an individual who could not explain away the reasons for a bad house with that word IF.

If you had come sooner.

If you had come later.

If it hadn't rained.

If the weather wasn't so fine.

If you had waited till next week.

If you had come last week.

If you could strike us Turkey fair.

If the people were not tired with the fair, and so on ad infinitum.

To cap the climax I heard a patron remark to T. C. King, the tragedian, after a very bad house—"If the Bishop hadn't died." "What has the Bishop to do with it?" grunted King. "Kings take precedence of Bishops." "Yes, I know, but he's dead." "Well," retorted King, "Then we couldn't expect him to come." "No; but the people are all looking at his body." "Well," growled the actor, "I've played in opposition to a great many attractions but never before to a dead Bishop."

CHAPTER XV.

PANTOMIME.

I always had a fondness for the Pantomimic and equestrian drama, and I have in a very chequered career managed many stars, but, after Madame Celeste, in that line I have seen but few who could charm an audience more than Marietta Ravel. She was very handsome—with plump and shapely figure—her smile was winning, and her stage presence had a certain magnetism about it. She imbued the impossible pantomimic dramas with so much vitality as to make them palatable to the public. "The French Spy," the usual vehicle for pantomimic stars, was her favorite role, for which her training with the Ravels eminently fitted her, and she therein introduced her wild Arab dance, and also the Splits to effect. She also gave "The Wizard's Skiff," a manuscript which I have often studied

to find out what was its meaning and always failed, "Wept of the Wishton Wish," (from Fennimore Cooper,) "Jartine," and other stage romances. She was also an adept on the tight rope, and in one of these dramas, which create a halo of romance on their producers, she makes an escape from the villain through the upper window, (crossing over a river I think,) accompanied by pizzicato music and a balancing pole, amidst the acclamations of a bewildered, admiring public. To the best of my belief she only played one speaking part, Buckstone's old-time drama, "Flowers of the Forest," in which she played "Cynthia, Queen of the Gipsies," and in appearance, grace and gesture it was a success. There was only one fault. She was tutored for the part by Pat Connolly, a good swordsman, and in one speech she innocently gave the parentage of her lingual instructor by saying "fetthered and bownd." She has retired from the stage some years, but her husband, Mart Hanley, still manages Mr. Harrigan's theatre, New York.

Kate Fisher—good-tempered and attractive—was another of my managerial specs, and often have I seen her bound on the back of the Wild Horse of Tartary and carried to her doom on all stages, from that of a mammoth opera house to one as extensive as a dining-room table. There also appears to memory's call the Cuban (Irish) Sylph. Her proportions were more ample than the average sylph. Her stage cognomen was Mlle. Zoe (Mrs. Ben. Yates), and her special feature was combats with four. Now music is as necessary to the "French Spy" as the character itself, but on one occasion we were sadly nonplussed. We were playing the date of a fair, and owing to King Alcohol and other causes the orchestra at night was *non est*, but we had a local brass band also, which was used as an incentive to draw in the public, so their services were called into requisition. The *ent'acte* music they delivered well enough, but when they came to the bloodthirsty combat of four and struck up for accompaniment to the death-dealing blows the well-known air of "If I had but a thousand a year," it was decidedly *ex cathedra*. Then I have essayed the drama with Zoe Gayton, a female of muscle, who made a walk from Frisco to New York as an advertising medium. Once I essayed the play of "Mazeppa" with a lady new to the equestrian drama. We hired a "fiery, untamed steed," trained the animal, who bore the torture tolerably

well. At night the aspirant came to the period when she was tied on the equine performer's back. Cue was given, " and let his fate strike terror through Poland," but the impetuous beast baulked. However, with spears, accompanied by shouts, the animal started up the runs, but before he could go far a voice from the gallery shouted "Milk!" a sound which caused the brute to stop short. He had not forgotten his previous avocation, and in his new business, like Othello, "his occupation was gone." The curtain fell as is customary, but he never reached the flies, and in the next scene the intelligent and probably underfed animal paid a compliment to the scenic art, for he commenced to nibble at the painted foliage on the set rocks.

CHAPTER XVI.

CANADA.

I made my first visit to Canada with the Fenians, but I must premise that I did not belong to the F.O.B., although I had made the acquaintance of their foolhardy leader, Gen. O'Neill, in Auburn, N.Y,. a town which might accept Goldsmith's couplet without egotism, "Auburn, sweet village of the plain." My mission was peace, and I may say that in Canada I have found it. Canada is to me dearer than any other country in the world, as my wife is a Canadian, and two of my children are Canadians. Besides, I can recall so many friends —Sir John A. Macdonald, who, like Washington, earned the title "Father of his country," and to whom for twenty years I never omitted to send a Christmas reminder (even when thousands of miles intervened); Sir George Cartier, the most affable of men; Earl Dufferin, who was on many occasions more than kind to me; Thomas White, who, if heaven had spared him, would have been the Dominion's premier; and (although I voted the Conservatlve ticket on one occasion, and, by-the-bye, the only chance I ever had,) Hon. George Brown and other distinguished politicians. Then again, although fate has blended misery with pleasure, I have managed and visited more cities, towns and villages than most theatrical men, and I have in weal or woe always found a cheering word and helping hand in the Dominion.

In Hamilton I made my first bow to a Canadian public with the high-sounding "London Comedy Co," which, with two exceptions, was composed of English. Mr. W. Marshall, the manager, wore naval clothes (they said he had been steward on board ship, which, perhaps, accounted for the nautical attire.) and was a man that no misfortune could discourage or trouble discomfit. If money came he was liberal; if it did not, like many others, myself included, he financiered. We made an immense hit in the "Ambitious City," and "Eccles," as pourtrayed by the writer, was an instantaneous hit. There I first met Denman Thompson. Of his checkered career it is needless to say anything but that it has been wondrously varied. Yet, after all his bitter experiences, he has the satisfaction of knowing in his old age that he has found the "Philosopher's Stone." He was a good Irish actor at this period, but his hankering was for the Yankee drama, and it is an extraordinary satire on public taste that his biggest success, "Joshua Whitcomb," should have emerged from a chrysalis that contained the merest shadow, and that scarcely reputable, "The Female Bathers." In this city we gave six weeks of uninterrupted successful performances, and during the holidays produced a Christmas pantomime on the English plan, entitled "Robinson Crusoe," written by myself and Mr. Speight, a newspaper man of more than average intellect, who met his death during my tenancy of Theatre Royal, Montreal, by going over the rapids in a canoe.

We wended our way to London, Belleville, Kingston, and other cities, with varying success, and the manager then engaged Albert Aiken, who was a dime novel producer of New York, for a few weeks, when we gave first representations of "The Phœnix," then bearing the euphonious title of "Witches of New York," and in which the author assumed the Protean role. On the three-sheet poster he figured as "The Rising Star," and never could be forgotten the look of indignation on his face when Nellie Nelson, a clever soubrette, marched in to rehearsal one morning and with a roguish smile handed him a small package. "What's this," quoth he. "It may help you; it's a paper of yeast," she replied. The rising star arose in anger. Now we first made acquaintance with Ottawa for a season at—Heaven save the mark—"Her Majesty's Theatre." Well, it was better than many others, and here we remained for some time imbibing know-

ledge and trying to distribute the same for a small stipend. It was in this city I first met a well-known figure in Canadian theatricals, John Townsend, a whole-souled, good hearted Englishman. I had seen him as an English Member of Parliament (who got there by accident), in Greenwich, and also saw him play (he never could pronounce the letter R) "Wichard's Himself Again," but if his acting had that defect he was still a gentleman. The family, all of whom played, had undoubted talent, and gave a Shakespearian repertoire which, although somewhat curtailed, was worthy of acceptation. At this writing I read of this sterling and amiable man—alone in the world, as his wife is now insane, and his family scattered—being the recipient of a benefit; well may it prosper. There was a very peculiar character there who was to us a source of much mirth, Capt. Joe Lee, and another who was full of love for the practisers of the art, Detective O'Neill. 'Twas in this theatre that Nellie Nelson first delineated "Mazeppa," and it was also the first attempt of the horse, but I never saw a better representation of the drama, for a first night. I was so nervous of her fate that when the horse started up the runs into the flies, otherwise the top of the stage, I ran headlong out of the stage door and panted until the plucky woman came down, after the fall of the curtain. The government patronized us nobly—the civil service clerks occasionally fell short of funds—but we recall with pleasure the reminiscences of Bytown. I would, however, here fill one omission and state that since that period in the same city I have managed theatres, rinks, and halls of every shade—that I have been also frozen out, burnt out, and comparatively kicked out, but I think it may be noted as a fact that actors remember nothing but the good, forget the past, accept the present, and live only in the future,

CHAPTER XVII.

TORONTO.

I have to go back to 1869, and thereabouts, to speak of Toronto's early theatrical days. There was only one theatre worthy the name — the Lyceum – owner, Mr. French ; lessee, Geo. Holman. It was small. It was English in construction. It had gallery boxes and pit ; and what seemed singular to a stranger was that the front row of the pit had its regular habitues, who were always *en rapport* with the players. I had first met the Holman Opera Co. two years before in Utica, N.Y. Their component parts were then limited, consisting of George (Pere), Benjamin, Sallie, Alfred, Julia, whilst William Crane (the now eminent comedian), W. Davidge, John Chatterson (now Signor Perugini), and a few others filled the bill. They were trying to make a success of a stock season there, but their ultimate bonanza was Canada, where they became the pets of the Dominion.

Miss Sallie was phenomenally clever. Imagine a prima donna, who was a *bona fide* vocalist, a sterling actress, a comedienne or tragedienne at will (although her stature was somewhat against her in the latter), and, furthermore, a burlesque actress who could do justice to Offenbach or Burnand, and only a sprightly girl at that, and you have Sallie Holman as I first knew her. Mr. and Mrs. Holman were both English, the former having been born in Margate, and many is the pipe we have puffed in unison discussing its residents. Both had played some seasons with New York's greatest comedian, Burton, and both, more especially Mrs. Holman, were thorough musicians. I have heard her remark, and experienced it for a fact, that she could sit down at the piano and play forty operas without the score, which is rather of a feat. Julia was the prettiest and had plenty of the quality known as "chic," but lacked the voice of her sister. Mr. Holman would also, at this period, occasionally appear in "Guy Mannering," "Doctor of Alcantara," &c., and was also a fine exponent of "Devilshoof." This company, when first I joined, then occupied a position unknown elsewhere in America. They played standard opera, such as "Il Trovatore," "Somnambula," "Satanella," "Bohemian Girl," and the

rest of the classic school. They were the first to introduce Offenbach in English. To them the public were indebted for the best version and the best representative of "La Grande Duchesse," "La Belle Helene," and principal roles in "Orphee aux Enfers," "Fille du Mdme. Angot," &c. Both serious and comic opera were produced with accuracy as regards scenery, costumes and detail, and this with a good supporting company and chorus, including the basso, Harry Peakes.

Drama was with Miss Sallie a *penchant*. I played "Micawber," in David Copperfield, to her "Little Emily," and it ran two weeks in this small city. "Arrah na Pogue," as also the Robertsonian series —"Ours," "Caste," "School," &c., each a week, and in these dramas she would introduce gems of song, such as Bishop's "Hark the Lark," in the sweetest and most cultured manner. To vary the pabulum they would occasionally present spectacle or burlesque, and I have never seen a better class of holiday entertainment than the "Ice Witch," which, by the bye, I arranged for them, or "Cherry and Fair Star," &c., which were put on elaborately, whether as regards scenery, cast or vocal requirements. Their fame was not confined to Canada, as I have accompanied them through the United States and seen their successes—noticeably, at the "National," Washington, Philadelphia for three weeks, New York, Richmond, &c., and their reputation and drawing powers induced Alice Oates, by the way an excellent vocalist, and others to attempt "Offenbach." To Mr. St. John, a journalist, they were indebted for most of their librettos. On occasional weeks, during my three weeks with their company, they would leave their theatre with a few people to support stars, such as Kate Fisher, Dominick Murray, Effie Henderson, not forgetting Lucy Rushton. It was a small stage, and the combined size of Miss Rushton and her train in "Lady Teazle" sufficed to hide the company from the audience. We had homes in the city, and what names were more familiar than John R. Spackman, George Barton, Alf. Hudson (and the sausage machine), Allan Halford (poor Allan was associated with me for over twelve years, and to his disgust had to leave Canada for Cleveland, where he died four years ago,) and his daughter, Ollie, who played with me as a child and woman, and Blanche Bradshaw, who was married to

Alfred Holman from my house, and Mrs. Bradshaw, a superb old woman, and Joseph Brandisi, not forgetting a tenor I had heard in Covent Garden, Brookhouse Bowler. Of these many have joined the great majority, including Misses Sallie and Julia, who both died in the prime of life; George Holman and Spackman; but they educated Toronto, operatically and dramatically, and you could not now find their successors as a company. Spackman was of the order sociable. He was a Philadelphian, but could imbibe a "Mutchkin" with any Scotchman, and Kerby's saloon was his favorite resting place, a fact of which the audience were fully cognizant. In proof, thereof, "Thro' by Daylight" had run nearly a week, and one evening I was awaiting Spackman's arrival on the scene, I had extemporized and looked off in vain for the humorous old man, until, hearing a footstep, my countenance beamed and I exclaimed, "Ah, at last he is here," when a gentleman recently arrived in the gallery shouted, "No, he ain't, Harry; I left him in Kerby's with a beer," thus ending my anxiety and the scene. Little Nell, the California Diamond, since a French actress, since Mrs. Ward, wife of the baseballist, made an immense hit in her day. Her medley with me was rapturously received, and bouquets innumerable littered the ground. I, of course, gathered them up and one night varied the business. I presented them to her, walked down to footlights, looked at gallery wistfully, received nothing, put my hand to my heart, sighed, and walked off, to the shouts of the audience. Next night I thought the business good and repeated it, when down came from the gallery a bouquet which fell upon me with weight enough to stagger me. Its component parts were dandelions, cabbages and carrots, all beautifully arranged. I smiled a silly smile, but next night I cut out the business. The Holmans, during their regime, taught many actors and vocalists who have made reputation from their schooling, and I remember one actor who was welcomed occasionally by showers of pies, as he was unpopular with the gallery, make a London impression, "Mr. Bellew." Under Mr. Holman's management I also played a week with the light comedian, Charles Matthews, the rapid, the easy, the glib tongued. I had seen him in England in his favorite round of characters, but I never expected to play leading old men and comedy in ten comedies and farces all in one week. "Game of Speculation," "Used Up,"

"Married for Money," "The Critic," I stood fairly well, others followed, finally I was imperfect in the text. He prompted so easily, that next night I was careless and knew less. On coming off the stage he said a little testily: "You don't know a line." I responded, "Mr. Matthews, it is not necessary, you prompt so imperceptibly that the audience are ignorant of the fact." He smiled and winked, and said, "Never mind, do better to-morrow." I had known something of his early history and entanglements, and on one evening he gave me a brief resume of his life, and in course of it remarked: "I never had a shilling until I married my present wife (she was Dolly Davenport's wife and cost the comedian a horsewhipping). I scarcely ever went out of a theatre without fear and trembling. My nasal organ became so sensitive I could smell a bailiff; my eye would recognize a dun on the instant. I can tell you this, if you can snap your fingers at your creditors you are enjoying luxury." I have found his words true since then. In a short newspaper article announcing his coming I summarized my own opinion of this comedian. "The last of his race, Charles Matthews is the ideal of grace and ease. In 'Patter vs. Clatter' his remarkable volubility has been the wonder of the English speaking world. His words come forth like a torrent, and yet each word is fully articulated and each sentence delivered with so much emberance of animal spirit, combined with the rapidity, as to be a feat. He has rescued Sheridan's play of 'The Critic' from oblivion, and his wonderful assumption of the role of 'Puff' combines these features: Change of voice, coolness at one moment, cajolery the next, and rattling vivacity the next." When I played with him in Canada he was sixty-eight years old, yet he played the *jeune premiere* as facile as a youth. He died in London, I believe, in 1878.

It is somewhat singular that my associations with Canadian managers have generally been those of the female sex. Mrs. Holman, in Toronto, was the *de facto* head, and a capable head at that. Then, in Montreal, Mrs. Buckland, and for a short period again in Toronto, Mrs. Morrison, who made her re-entre on the stage sometime after the decease of her husband. John Nickinson (the father of Mrs. Morrison), was almost the pioneer of theatricals in Toronto, and in parts like the "Old Guard," for which his military training had fitted him, he was

exceptionally fine. His daughters all inherited the dramatic talent, but to Charlotte might well be accorded the palm. Few actresses of her time had more spirit as "Lady Gay," more archness as "Nan," or "The Maid with the Milking Pail," while the teachings of the English school seemed to permeate her presence. Under her management of the Lyceum, with a fine dramatic caste, appeared J. W. Wallack, and his rendition of Dicken's "Fagin" was faultless. In the jail scene his acting was of the most intense and almost repulsive nature. His cringing fear and cries of horror at his impending doom seemed to appal the audience. In the "Man with the Iron Mask" and such characters he was also inimitable, but his "Hamlet" lacked semblance of youth, although it bore the evidence of a great actor's study. Barton Nill, Ben Rogers (who had a thorough conception of Sir Harcourt Courtley), and others were in the support, and this season was the forerunner of the erection of a more ambitious structure.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN MONTREAL.

In 1872 I had the offer of the lease of the Theatre Royal, Montreal, and in an evil hour I undertook the task. They say nature adapts the back to the burden, but if so I must be terribly round-shouldered from the weight I bore. I suffered all the ills that managerial flesh is heir to. I learnt financiering, dodging and, not to mince matters, lying, and every other civil but not criminal sin, besides wasting three years of my life in hunting shadows.

There were then only two theatres, and it was not a theatrical city by any means. It had only been customary with John Buckland to play a few months of summer, but I was determined to inaugurate a new era, so I played a winter season and, horrible to say, struggled through Lent, and, worse than all, did not exclude Good Friday. The stellar system was in vogue. The stars shared after a certain amount, but sometimes it did not reach that amount, and then of ne-

cessity I had to assist my confreres on their way. I introduced all the current attractions, lost money regularly—in fact, with but few exceptions, scarcely saw a paying week. The Jews—heaven bless them—were my most fervent friends—always ready with kind words and money to assist me. Of course there were some oases in the arid dramatic desert, and amongst them the "Black Crook," which, owing to a pastoral letter being read in the churches, filled the house. The Earl of Dufferin and the Countess had been kind to me in Ottawa, condescending on two occasions to visit that most arctic theatre, The Rink, and were kinder still in speech and purse in Montreal, where he visited us twice or thrice. The other bright spots were the engagements of T. C. King, of whom more anon; Wybert Reeve, in the "Woman in White," and with whom I first played "Sir Peter Teazle," and one immense success; Augustin Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre Co. for two weeks, who at advanced prices with "Alixe," "Big Bonanza," "Fernande," &c., turned people away. T. C. King has been always, in my eyes, the "ideal tragedian," but, like Charles Dillon, he had this fault—he was too accessible. He loved society, and would have it—if not of the refined class, why, for want of a better, the lounger or frequenter of bars. A farceur says the usual attributes of a tragedian are "Pot belly, chuckle head and bully the chandelier," but here was a man of goodly height, with a Roman face, manly form, and a sonorous voice, which in the very tempest of his passion was never over forced, but clear and distinct. I had seen him, from early days, in consort with Charles Kean, the "Vandenhoff," whom he somewhat resembled, and all the other tragic kings. He had been imported into New York with that gruesome drama (from Victor Hugo), "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," which had proved a dire failure, and was awaiting salary and developments. It did not take the erection of many "Chateaux en Espagne" for me to lure him thence to Montreal. No glaring paper announced his advent, but the simple announcement, "The Drury Lane Tragedian," with a little advance dodgery, a few well selected paper notices, and a properly rehearsed production of "Othello" saved me from utter ruin. On his first appearance as the "Moor," I fidgetted around the front of the theatre, nervous and anxious, but with an assumption of cheerfulness, and when it came to the Handkerchief episode and I heard the audience recall him in the

middle of the scene (not act, mark you), I felt a *novus homo*. Standard plays succeeded each other. "Richelieu" I had in view, but Mrs. Buckland advised me out of deference to the feelings of the Roman Catholics not to place a cardinal on the stage. We had had a priest of the Father Tom type hissed off a little previously, but I combated the idea and actually made an announcement stating that the glory of France and religion was upheld in the "wily Cardinal." We drew six crowded houses with Lytton's excellent drama, and followed with "Rob Roy," "Esmeralda," "Macbeth," and "Virginius." I was paying debts and, being somewhat penurious in these productions, was at times woefully handicapped for ancient wardrobes for supers, whose dressing was an eyesore to King. In one drama requiring armoured leggings, of which I had none, I remarked "Be of good cheer, they will be there to-night, Tom." When night came, placing my super army in line, I called out the tragedian and pointed them out. "Aha," he said, with a smile, "that's something like." In the course of play on came the rush of contending forces, the army naturally enough rubbed against each other in the melee, and I heard a deep, bell-like voice exclaim, "Great heavens! he's chalked their trousers." I had chalked a line straight down the side of their legs, and artistically chalked buttons at intervals. Wishing to close theatre after King's season of six weeks, I induced him to tour the provinces. In Quebec city our success was unprecedented, and we were playing, lowest admission one dollar. The crossing thence to Point Levis was on the ice over the River St. Lawrence with carrioles or hacks. Mr. King made enquiries as to depth of river, rise of tide (which is very high there), looked at the huge fissures, and then hired a lumberman's batteau (boat), in which he regally sat and allowed himself to be pulled across at a cost of five dollars and immense laughter from the populace. He had no idea of the value of money, whilst he had an open hand for charity, and as fast as wealth poured in he would scatter it. At the Queen's Hotel, Toronto, his room did not suit his ideas, so the clerk, in tones of chaff, said, "Perhaps you would like the Dufferin suite?" "Exactly what I want," he replied, and we had it. His temper was equable, and never was he happier than when he could give enjoyment to the company. In business of the stage his kindness was universal, and he would cover any errors, except once, when the

"Lady Macbeth," for whom he was looking on one side, entered on the other, and at whom he glared for a moment and then in insulted tones exclaimed "Never more enter the rear portal."

I must confess that I at Kingston completely demoralized him. It was warm—so was Polonius—I would, off the stage, remove my beard. In the play scene I went on the stage minus the beard. The first actor spoke his speech, then I followed with the text. "This is too long," Hamlet continued, "It shall be the barbers with thy beard," and looking at me thunderstruck he continued, "Great Cæsar, he hasn't got a beard on."

After a trial of Buffalo, N.Y., and some other towns in that state, and the weather being too hot we closed, and Mr. King and I parted. Next season he played with Mr. Herndon, but it was not so successful, and owing to careless manipulation of his funds I do not think he bore away much money, although I might state that his clear receipts per night were not less than $400 during the Montreal success, and not far behind in many other cities.

In '74 I had a heavy fight for supremacy with Ben de Bar, who had leased the Dominion Theatre on Champs de Mars, and who had come from St. Louis specially to crush me. He was piqued at my having obtained control of the Theatre Royal, which he had formerly run in co-partnership with Mrs. Buckland. He had one advantage, which was, that if any star or combination appeared with me, he would rule them off his theatres at St. Louis and New Orleans. He was an admirable comedian, founded on Paul Bedford or John Reeves' manner, and made a good "Falstaff," but rich as he was his ducats melted in this undertaking. Having no other theatre to sweeten stars, I was compelled to pay certainties to them, which made me feel uncertain as to my tenure, but I made him curtail his season, as he could not bear the constant drain on his purse. In the St. Lawrence Hall, where I lived for two years, I was introduced to Paul du Chaillu, who was roaming at will, and we became transient friends. He will be remembered mostly for his Gorilla adventures. He was suffering one evening from severe headache and I prescribed a dose of theatre, where, on that night, I was peculiarly happy. On return home he said, with characteristic kindness, "Lindley, I was sick, you cured me, your antics were so funny." I replied, "Thanks;

you are a good judge of baboons." I may without egotism say I was popular and at times sacrificed the unities. I paid Oliver Doud Byron a certainty for three weeks to produce "Across the Continent," "Hero," "Ben McCullough," all lurid melo-dramas, but drawing cards. During one of these lucubrations a gentleman *Bacchi plenus* sat in the orchestra chairs and incontinently snored, to annoyance of Byron. "Leave him to me," I said, quietly and without further ado, being armed with revolvers with deadly (?) blank cartridges, I strode over footlights and orchestra to the snoring offender and fired off in the neighborhood of his ear the six loads, whilst he jumped wildly in the air, then I quickly retired to the stage and continued my dialogue to an accompanimen tof yells and shouts from the audience. The public were crying for better style of attractions, but no one knows save a manager the difficulty of keeping week by week the bill of fare to a proper standard. The idea struck me one evening to write a newspaper article condemnatory, so asking, I obtained permission to lay it on thick. I did. I wrote two columns anathematizing my own management, expatiated on the miserable style of attractions, depreciated everything that I had done, heaped coals of fire on my own head, and lamented that Montreal had not received proper treatment at my hands, but artfully managed to close up the article with a few lines stating that I had awoke to the necessity of making a redeeming effort in the engagement of a London actor, Wybert Reeve, etc. Next morning, at the breakfast table from over their newspapers, I observed furtive glances on all sides, and during the day I received words of sympathy for this unjustifiable attack, but at night I chuckled over a replenished exchequer.

This also recalls another newspaper which, without intention, heaven knows! helped me, *The Daily Witness*, which bears the title of "the only religious daily." I saw advertised on the walls with gigantic posters in which female limbs were the prominent feature—The female minstrels. I knew they were death to both theatres, although announced for Mechanics' Hall. I consulted Ben de Bar, manager, but he was apathetic, so I used Cardinal Richelieu's idea, "as the wolf's skin was too small I eked it out with the fox's." I wrote a letter to *The Daily Witness*, signed by the ubiquitous John Smith, and asked in its columns if the citizens of Montreal were

aware of the advent of an openly advertized immoral performance at the Mechanics' Hall, a building which had been erected for the education and improvement of the toiling masses. Why should this building be prostituted in the manner advertized? Why should our young men be brutalized and contaminated in a hall, ostensibly erected for their moral advancement by an exhibition of females whose unchaste pictures might be seen on the walls in a state of hideous semi-nudity? The management of the hall could not surely be aware of this infamy, and it behoved them to withdraw its use for such a nefarious and obscene exhibition. The religious daily swallowed bait, hook and all. Next morning I smiled with glee, and to the satisfaction of Ben de Bar and myself saw the depraved (?) creatures banished to St. Jean Baptiste village, where morality was at a lower ebb. I could not, however, even with superhuman efforts keep out of debt. I was besieged by remorseless creditors and played "Micawber" in real life. I would make my exit from the hotel by the back door or ladies' entrance to avoid the persistent. It is peculiar the manner a manager will gamble on the chances. The business is more of a lottery than any other, and he who embarks in it becomes a confirmed gambler. On one occasion a bailiff walked on to the stage with an injunction or some other wordy legal document, which was to seize the curtain, *i.e.*, prevent its rise. The limb of the law came to me and said: "Curtain cannot go up until I am paid $55, etc." "My friend," said I. "That curtain is not my property, but it goes up at eight." Orchestra played. Bailiff sat on the roller. Bell rang. Up went curtain and bailiff—but the latter went only a portion of the way. His look of prostrate anguish as he retired in silence and grief resembled that of the dying gladiator. I also had to lock my ticket sellers in the office to prevent seizures on various occasions. One combination I formed procrastinated the evil day, viz: a burlesque organization headed by Eliza Weathersby and Ella Chapman (she who had played Eva with me years ago). Eliza possessed rare beauty, elegant form, and her schooling with Lydia Thompson had perfected her in English burlesque, our productions of which were complete. She afterwards married Nat Goodwin and died in New York a few years afterwards. Both of these artists I had known as children, and the Weathersbys in England were all friends of mine.

It required colossal efforts to draw them in, and after "Black Crook" and other effective spectacles I took a trip to New York and made arrangements with the Kiralfys to produce "The Deluge," which, although drawing the largest first night's house ever known, presaged disaster. On its initial production I made five speeches—apologetic—on account of sticks. I threw four men out of the gallery. I perspired from work as I never did before, and then, worse than all, my actors were deficient in lines, and one, the leading man, "Adam," was drunk. He was aware that there was nothing stronger than cider in Eden, so had filled himself with whiskey. He got down readily enough on his knees to "Eve," but to rise endeavoured to use one of her limbs for a support, which conduced to the laughter of the gods. Then the "Ballet" got mixed, and I might say that Scriptural history repeated itself, for the only character doing its business correctly was "The Snake." The failure might reasonably be attributed to the Kiralfys, who contracted to bring a ballet, but they read between the lines and brought only a *maitre de ballet*. To instruct an average extra in ballet and marches is a task, and to get them in an ordinary city is still more so. By dint of effort I had secured twenty girls—rehearsed them, even on Sunday—and had to lock them in on Monday. Then, when it came to the flimsy "Paradisean garments," it was a struggle, and a strike was averted by lengthening them, yet I noted, during the week, that these young ladies shortened them more and more. Some of their admirers in front of the house had praised the elegance of their natural or padded calves. Four nights of the "Deluge" washed out the audience and I had to substitute an English actress of merit, Julia Seaman, in a strong drama entitled "Satan." John L. Toole, the English comedian, on whom I had built great hopes, was also introduced to Canadians by me. His requirements were a little extravagant—he required special people. I engaged them and opened to a full house at increased prices, and thereby hangs a tale. I had written Mr. Toole, begging him to make a change in the plays he purposed opening in, viz., "Ici on Parle Francais," "The Weavers and Crossing the Line," stating as a reason that the farces were worn out, and that "Dearer Than Life," or something stronger, would draw better. A curt refusal was mailed back, so I had no resource. An immense audience witnessed the first two farces apatheti-

cally—lingered wearily through the last, and the "gods," who are the index of a house, I heard muttering, as they came from their altitude, "Him a comegun; he's worse than Lindley," which proved to what a depth of degradation we had both fallen. A bad first night will kill an engagement, as it did in this case, so I ventured to suggest, as we were going to Quebec in two weeks, a change, which was refused. I had the effrontery to remark that "Ici on Parle Francais" was, in his hands, inimitable from a cockney point of view, but that London was only a section of the world, and that I had localized the farce, had sung a French song in it, and otherwise brutalized it. Nothing would induce him to forego his favorite bill, so everywhere I played him it was a repetition—open to $500, close to $50. Had he have played "The Dodger," which is an elaborate creation, his gain would not have been my loss. On a re-engagement for a production of the "Cricket on the Hearth," I did better business. The arrangement of the play, "Boucicaults," is, perhaps, better, yet his acting as "Caleb Plummer," contrasted with Joe Jefferson's and some others, is not favorable, inasmuch as Mr. Toole's strainings after pathos and emotional points are absolute defects.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHARLES FECHTER.

After Toole, on whom I wasted plenty of time with no tangible returns, I produced mushy melodramas with mushroom stars and some English successes, with myself as a feature, but King Cash was not absolute monarch, and I was at my wits' end for a good drawing attraction, when, with Neil Warner, I thought of Fechter, whom I had lost sight of since he was the "Idol of the Hour" in the great metropolis. I had a vivid remembrance of the then new "Hamlet," for from him the rest of tragedians have accepted the innovation of blonde hair and melodramatic ideas. At that time he appeared to me to be too realistic. He made the Prince ultra colloquial, and being de-

ficient in power of passion he substituted picturesqueness and a conformity to actual life, which many call nature.

Nature ceases to be nature when the greatest passions are to be exhibited, because the restraint of modern habits leads more to their repression than representation. In everything I saw Fechter do then and later it always seemed to me that he was too modern. His was a French "Hamlet," who might have lounged amongst his expatriated countrymen to Leicester Square or in Paris in the Bois de Boulogne. Taken in melodramas, such as "The Corsican Brothers," "Ruy Blas," "Duke's Motto," and the "French School" he was *sanspareil*.

However, to resume, I started to Philadelphia, where I found the friend of Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens, in far from palatial apartments, modelling a plaster statuette. He was then approaching corpulence, and had not the exact semblance of the Dane. Having stated my object and come to terms as regards his services, I was met by suggestions to engage people, who would have monopolized the gross receipts, but I conceded several points and engaged specially Lizzie Price, Frank C. Bangs, who is even now the type of the genuine tragedian; H. Langdon, a robust exponent of the legitimate, and a popular favorite, Vining Bowers. We opened our season at advanced rates with "Ruy Blas," in which Fechter displayed his characteristic picturesqueness, and Mr. Bangs was also in the race. Then followed "Duke's Motto" and "No Thoroughfare," which, with the stars unctuous, "So Glad" awoke some enthusiasm. My guarantee to him amounted to some $500 nightly. The limit was barely reached, but I was relying on "Hamlet" for a recuperator. To my disgust the star who was in clover (the manager was in nettles), dilly-dalleyed over its production, and after one night's further procrastination, for which I had to close theatre, to put it mildly, he became muddled with alcohol. Foreseeing the impending storm, I, on its production, made a reasonable deduction from the receipts, so that on its second representation I found myself in the throes of a strike. The star refused to play, and the actors, who had received no modicum of their pay from his guarantee, also refused to don their garments. I was nonplussed. However, I ordered the members of my own company to put on garments for another play, and announced my difficulty to the audience, and stated that owing to the indisposition of

the star "Hamlet" would not be presented, but that, instead thereof, I would vocally illustrate it in my song of "Hamlet," together with E. H. Brink, who was popular in "Under the Gaslight." A voice broke in from the audience (Vining Bowers) with the remark: "Mr. Fechter is not sick, and the management has not paid his guarantee," and proceeded to retail their grievances amidst yells from the audience. I awaited silence and then calmly replied: "Ladies and gentlemen—I lied. I have lied twice to the public. Yesterday I placed placards on doors announcing indisposition of Mr. Fechter. I lied. He was not indisposed but intoxicated." This brought out another contradiction from the voice. I awaited quiet, then said: "I place my case in your hands. At two o'clock on the morning previous I visited Mr. Fechter's rooms, which were fully equipped with decanters of brandy and other emissaries of destruction. Against his desire I refused to partake. The gentleman then placed his arms around me and kissed me on the cheek, and I—I—I appeal to you, 'Would any sober man kiss me?'" Judgment—The argument was conclusive.

However, it was the presage to my downfall, which came shortly after. When penniless and alone I interviewed my landlady, Mrs. Buckland, in whose purse I had deposited a fortune, and received refusal, so leaving my trunks with Mr. Geriken as security, except one, I left Montreal, riding on the railroad check of that trunk to Toronto, where I joined the Holman Opera Co. shortly afterwards at the Horticultural gardens to play farces, and where I lived to see retributive justice fall on the actors of the Fechter Co. some three weeks later, and the which I must relate as savouring of humour. I had strolled into the theatre with the view of seeing what company Mr. Fechter had gathered together. The play was "Hamlet," and thus it ran—Overture—then bell tingle, tingle—a murmur of voices crescendo, till you heard, "It shall go up," "No, it won't," &c.—repeated tingle—curtain rises—Bernardo solus—"Who's there?"—no response—"Who's there da capo?"—a final angry forte, "Who's there?" Voice from the gallery, "D—d if I know." Tingle—curtain falls. End of Act 1. Momentary pause—curtain drawn aside, from which emerges in sombre clothing the moody Prince and informed the audience that owing to a speculative manager, who had imported the company into Canada and had not paid him, his company had refused to

go on without their salaries. Here Mr. Bangs appeared as "Laertes" and said: "This is not true. (Uproar.) This man, Mr. Fechter, received the greater portion of his money, and his hotel bill for himself and Miss Price was over $300 for the week." (Renewed uproar.) Here came in, at opposite side, Miss Price (quiet): "I say that Mr. Bangs is not speaking correctly." Mr. Bangs (excitedly): "I refuse to answer that (emphasis on 'that') woman." (Hisses.) Entrance of another lady: "I am Mrs. Drew, relative of Mrs. Drew. (Order.) Mr. Fetcher, what I would say is"— Prompter's head through curtain—"Come off, all of you." Babel ensued, and finally, I think, poor John L. Spackman came in and played all the boycotted parts. Mr. Fechter deserved more from the American public than he obtained, but an erratic disposition led him to extremes. Poor fellow, he died in 1879, leaving behind him a legacy of romantic picturesqueness, which Salvini, the present O'Neil in "Monte Cristo," and others have accepted.

I would, as a close to this chapter, relate one incident reminiscent of Mrs. W. Drew. Her husband, a happy, good-natured brother of John and Frank Drew, died in Montreal whilst she was in my company. She was heartbroken. I sent her, accompanied by a young gentleman, with the body of the deceased, which was to be buried on Sunday from his father's home at Hamilton, Ont. They started and arrived in Hamilton, but, having changed cars at Toronto, the body was left there accidentally, and when the hour for funeral service arrived the mourners and relatives were there, but the corpse was absent.

CHAPTER XX.

ONCE MORE HAMILTON.

PASSING OVER MANY DANGERS OF FLOOD AND FIELD.

Some twelve years ago I had occasion to tide over a few months in this city on account of my wife's sickness, and there made acquaintance with a character as well known there as "The Gore" itself. He formerly kept a hotel, but drifted into theatricals, in which he seemed to revel, and it has been said on one occasion the performers stood him on his head to allow their earnings to drop out of his pockets, which, however, must be taken *cum grano salis*. Dark complexion. Dark—very dark. Origin according to his *ipse dixit*—French (Detroit river). He then kept a kind of hospital for broken-down professionals, who made it a stopping place to fill up vacuums professionally and stomachically. From this gentleman originated a phrase pretty common throughout the continent, which arose thus. He had a crooked forefinger, and when procrastinating his payments he would use this finger as an *argumentum ad hominem*, whence arose the saying, "giving the finger." The boarding house, where his artistes stayed, was large, but somewhat dilapidated, and many jokes, to which he was impervious, were retailed at his expense. I have seen Joe Banks enter smilingly to breakfast with an erratic door knob for a shirt stud, and on another occasion, when the Doctor (?) descended from on high, there was Joe on the rickety stairs, with a bottle of mucilage, busy—very busy. "What are you doing?" he muttered. "Only sticking the stairs together," was the reply. At his theatre, on John street, the bill of fare comprised variety and drama, for the latter of which stars of the sensational type would illustrate the terrors of the "Wild West" and other agonizing fields—one of which I had denominated "the John street horror." Fanny Herring (a reminder of the old Bowery), and yet as versatile as a chameleon, was one of these, and no matter what play I might put up was *au fait*, whether it was "Ragged Pat," "Lucretia Borgia," "Jack Sheppard or Helen Macgregor in Rob Roy," which we produced with

the addenda of bagpipes, fling dancers, sword dancers, etc. His daughter was an excellent musician. During this engagement Kate Fisher played "Dick Turpin," in which my son was shot by a pistol which hung fire. Crack went the report—a shriek—consternation of audience and immediate fall of curtain. He was blind for a few days and bears the marks yet. The police magistrate insisted on arresting the man who fired the shot (R. S. Lyle), who had been with me from a boy, whilst the property man should have been the victim. I manufactured many actors during this period. One episode was very amusing. Salaries were in the mist, and a clever trapeze performer notified me as stage manager that unless paid his act would be missing that evening. I cajoled him and thought no more about it until I heard music strike the customary chords and noted him motionless on his trapeze. Down came a piece of string and a scrawling card bearing this legend: "Tie my salary to the string." I sent boy in buttons for the document. Foreseeing mischief I then forwarded it to the manager, who, seeing no resource (with an expectant public awaiting), tied his salary to the string—then chords—agitation—and flying artist. Yet to this manager's kindness many of the best exponents of varied lines owed temporary help and tided over dangerous seas. The last time I saw the doctor was but two years ago, when he had his own equipage—a dilapidated waggon and a "Gil Blas Rosinante"—and was addressing a small crowd on a country market place on the virtues of a remedy which cured all the diseases to which flesh is heir to, mixing up neuralgia, opthalmia, diarrhœa, corns, bunions, etc., with medical terms and applications foreign to any materia medica.

He was very sensitive as a manager. He could not write, and any allusion to his ignorance thereof was a crushing insult. In fact I might say he was as sensitive as an actor, for mark this, the ego preponderates in the actor's nature. He is blind to his own faults, impatient of correction and lacks that desire of which Burns speaks, "Wad that some God the gift wad gie us, etc.," yet he has perseverance and loves his profession. Some will go on fifty years and never advance a step. It has been said of an actor that he would bear the vilest appellations, the roughest insult, even a blow without undue resentment, but when assailed with the addition, "You are no actor,"

the climax was reached and his assailant felled at his feet. Their epidermis is usually thin. A newspaper critique, if slightly antagonistic, will worry an actor like a skin disease. In a notice the omission of his name is equally as bitter. To cite a case in this city, young Bellew complained to the local scribe that he had played three weeks with the company and his name had never appeared. Wait until to-morrow, said my friend, Josh Buchanan, the pe.man. He waited, and on the morrow, after the usual dissertation, appeared—"Mr. Bellew played a Sailor. His acting is like the peace of God, it passeth all understanding." He left the breakfast table on reading it. It is said that there never was an actor, when playing with a star, who did not think he could do better in the star's role. He lives an unreal life. His world is bounded by four walls. The public is his *Deus*; their applause his food; their censure his extinction. He marvels that the outside world does not take cognizance of or interest in the merest histrionic trifles, and despises it for its ignorance of dramatic stage craft, and yet he labors on unceasingly and generally dies in harness. He will work on, toil on, even when sickness assails him. He will forget the spasms of pain for one momentary gleam of appreciation from a fickle public, and after spending a whole life in their service he, as Shakespeare says, "is seen and heard no more." The great bard touched a sympathetic chord when he instructed the chamberlain to "see the players well bestowed."

CHAPTER XXI.

ANIMALS.

On leaving Richardson's Thespian Temple I became peripatetic and wandered through small burghs, and, leaving the ordinary course of events, will digress somewhat to speak of animals, for whom I always entertained affection. During my wandering days I have been accompanied by bears, wolves, ponies, dogs, &c., but the most bitter experience I ever had was with a pair of goats, attached to a baby carriage (*a la* Tom Thumb), in which rode (*vide* Bills) the greatest

wonder (smallest) of the civilized world, Admiral Tot. As instructed from infancy his mission was to lie. The dwarf—for such he was—was half imbecile, and relied upon his parents and tutors to drag him through his performances. During exhibition in answer to certain questions daily rehearsed, the few brains allotted his diminutive body would be dormant occasionally. He was born in Fitchburg, Mass., weighed 50 lbs., height two feet six inches, real age 12,—much older on the programmes, but in response to the usual queries he would sometimes be muddled. Question—Where were you born? Answer—12 years old. What is your weight? Fitchburg, Mass. What age are you? 50 pounds. This sometimes bewildered the audience and agitated the questioner. In Kingston by dint of persuasion and carefully eschewing the goats, I obtained from the officers the services of the regimental band for a parade. They started—myself leading the procession, and goats and baby carriage with banners flying brought up the rear. Next day I applied for repetition. Unfortunately the officer who had given permission had seen the parade, and gave me a curt refusal with these remarks: "Had I have known it, do you think I would have allowed the regimental band to walk through the streets of Kingston, up to their knees in mud, in advance of a couple of dem'd dirty goats and a demmed baby carriage with some demmed monstrosity in it? No, sir; dem it, no, sir!" There are times when goats fail to draw (excluding the baby carriage), and we arrived at Brockville with disaster fully apparent. The hotel-keeper ("landlords have flinty hearts" occasionally) demanded his money, and the supplies were cut off. Money! We had barely enough to take us to Ottawa. We were ten in number, as we gave performances with the drawf as a *bonne bouche* as it were. There was no food, and actors eat. Yes, there were—the goats. I interviewed the Boniface and gave up goats and carriage for security. After breakfast one of the ladies said, "Harry, how was breakfast obtained?" I replied, "We have eaten the goats," at which she incontinently fainted, and, like Rachael, would not be comforted. There to those poor animals I said Vale! Vale! This recalls two small ponies with which I advertised our advent in the State of Ohio, and an event which took place there. It was a mining town—Salineville—mud and blackguardism on the surface—coal beneath the surface. The ponies (joint weight, only 198 lbs.) bolted and ran away

through slough and mire, and galloped over two small iron bridges which spanned a very dirty river. The village custodian, instructed by the county prosecutor, caused the arrest of the driver, and an immediate court was convened. The prosecutor stated the case. The actor who was driving gave his defence. Oho! says the prosecutor, you mean to tell me you could not hold them ponies. "Those ponies," ejaculated the irate driver. "If I am to be tried I insist upon being cross-examined grammatically. This did not mollify judge or attorney, but elicited threats of a fine for contempt of court.

As proprietor of animals I was called and asked for my defence, and commenced (having obtained copies thereof) :

"Here is your warrant and here is your by-law." I find this: "Any owner allowing his horse or other animals to go over the bridges of this village faster than a walk shall be liable to a penalty of five dollars or more, etc., etc." I now say that the council, the framers of this law, must have been laboring under temporary insanity, for if carried into effect who would escape. A cow is an animal, a dog, a cat, a rat is an animal. I ask you, would your judicial functions allow you to fine the owners of these necessary and unnecessary animals? Furthermore, according to usual definition, man is an animal, a policeman is a man, therefore, as this policeman, an animal, ran over the bridge, I demand that he, an animal, be fined with the other animals (applause from the spectators, who never sympathize with the minions of the law). The case was closed with remark—"Eight dollars and fifty cents and costs." The attorney and judge's terms of office were near expiration, so fees were their sole aim. Two days after a grand parade marched through the streets to the depot, consisting of the two ponies and carriage draped in mourning, with an emblazoned banner bearing thereon, "Eight dollars and fifty cents and costs." Six stalwart men held the reins of the miniature equines. The judge and county prosecutor were not re-elected. Now for Bruin. We never muzzled or put a ring in the nose of any bear we have used for exhibition, but it takes a wary eye to keep watch on the paws of Bruin, as he handles them so quickly and with utter disregard of the Queensberry rules, and his blow is always swift and cat like.

Some four years ago a large bear I had escaped from the baggage car by slipping off his collar. We were just outside the depot at Wheeling, W. Va. Off started "Ursa Major" with negroes scampering in every direction, until he struck the Iron Works, where puddlers and others workers threw down their tools and picked up their weapons for the chase.

Followed by yells, runs, doubling runs, and shouts, the bear kept well ahead, until finally disgusted with their imprecations he found a corner, then abruptly wheeled around and faced his pursuers, who, to a man, incontinently turned and fled. Puffed and blown I arrived there with my son and a bag of candy, and in a moment slipped on the collar and led him back in triumph. If not teased a bear can be made somewhat tractable. The eye is an easy index of his temper, and the only emollient I have found for his hardened nature, even in angry moments, is sugar.

A wolf is also supposed to be unloving, crafty and rapacious, but if taken young they may be made almost affectionate or dog-like. One we brought up, a magnificent specimen of the Timber Wolf (Lupus Canadiensis), travelled with us thousands of miles. He never snarled unless disturbed when eating, and it was a matter of extreme difficulty to keep him from perpetually kissing the faces of those he knew and liked. This may be an isolated case, but it goes to show that kindness is an important factor in softening the nature even of savage beasts.

CHAPTER XXII.

PERIPATETIC.

My second wife, who now lies slumbering in Calvary, New York, was known as May Robinson. She possessed a wonderfully high voice, and, having a capital idea of stage business in lighter class of comedies, she gave me the idea of essaying a petite musical company under the title of the Bijou Opera Company. Under this high-sounding appellation we endeavoured to eke a living in small towns. Many

were the weary hours I passed in endeavouring to worry through to a brighter future. I became a better physiognomist than Lavater, and could tell at a glance the disposition of a landlord or printer, from a monetary point of view. I met sunshine and storm with a preponderance of the latter. On the Welland Canal, which they were then extending, we encountered one peculiar experience. It was pay-day at Port Robinson. A large audience, composed of the tough element, who were also full of spirits, greeted us. The entertainment progressed amidst din and disorder. A fight commenced in the reserved seats. I expostulated. A burly navigator shouted, "Go on, Harry, they'll be through in a minute." Rush—melee—lull—interval—then same act repeated, when I saw the proprietor of the hall remonstrating. Another rush—a broken door and boisterous flying exit of landlord. Another dose of this and visions of a similar exit of performers floated through my mind. There was a roof from the dressing-room window leading to the ground. Some one must be sacrificed. We had reached the final act, so I put my wife and another lady through the window, the rest following them quickly, one by one, until there was only one gentleman (in utter ignorance of our escape), who was giving an elongated musical specialty. He had to bear the brunt, and did so manfully, as he was captured by the audience, who insisted on his filling the programme, and who, finally amidst Babel worse confounded, fell upon each other like Kilkenny cats—and all was still.

Like Oliver Twist, we kept moving on and amused sparse audiences in halls which varied from opera house to *quasi* dog kennels. One in particular, Coboconk (immortalized by Jimuel Briggs), invariably chills me at mention of its name. Outside 40° below zero; inside an audience of 40. One stove inside the hall, which was surrounded by the forty. It was so cold that the performers would appear in turn, leave the stage, and then huddle sympathetically with the audience round that stove. All performances must end, so, at conclusion, I washed my face in the dressing-room, picked up a towel —and—the towel—stood and mocked me, having been frozen as firm as a policeman's club. I have since wondered at our pertinacity, and have discovered that the adage, "Perseverantia obstaet rerum," is untrue if taken as a theatrical proverb.

A Canadian tour in winter—with thermometer down—snow covering the earth—with an eager and a nipping air—is not desirable, and talk as they will of the beauties of the sleigh ride, with its accompaniment of jingling bells, I have always thought after a twelve mile ride that I would rather take mine on the first of July. In the summer Canada is a paradise—when with verdure clad I have walked miles and revelled in its gorgeous leafy woods and clear, balmy air. There are so many peculiarities in the towns of the Dominion, where race and religion differ so much. Take Alexandria, Ont., to wit. It does not remind you of its namesake in Egypt, nor that sleepy city in Virginia, where I have sat in George Washington's master's chair (masonic), but it may remind you of the "Hielands." Six hotels, kept by six Macdonalds. Call Mac! and every inhabitant turns his head. The Macdonalds are so numerous that they bear prefixes, as Sandy, Lang Sandy, Wee Sandy, Rory, Lang Rory, and one Rory who bears the appellation of Rory the ——. Fill up the vacuum with the mother of dogs and you have it. If you know a few sentences of Gaelic you are sure of unbounded affection and unlimited whiskey. It may be clannish, but the heart goes with it. I have heard it said by enthusiastic Scotchmen that Gaelic was the language spoken in Eden, to which has been added, with show of reason, "Very true, for there is only one, the Divinity, who could understand it." In the Quebec province there you strike the French Canadian, and I have been in towns where no English is spoken. Take Point au Pic (Murray Bay), where, on one summer's tour, I was illustrating negro character. It was Greek to the audience, and I found that I must make a bold strike for favor, so from compulsion I would vary the dialect from pure Southern negro to gags and sentences in Canadian *patois*, which aroused the *habitant* to delirious frenzy, but I am afraid the unities were considerably demoralized. This is only a sample of Quebec villes, and yet it occurs in Ontario, and there is a Germany there also, of which Berlin (Ont.) is the capital. I have found Dutchmen (I beg pardon, Germans) more phlegmatic (and I have played in Hamburg, Germany) than any race, although when they warm to you they are WARM in the extreme. It has been said Indians are non-appreciative. Just after the war I had several Indian experiences in Michigan (Midland City, &c.), when I was the pioneer of dramatic

civilization, and even of late years I was at Parry Sound during the government pay and had quite a sprinkling of the only real American, "Lo, the poor Indian," and I noted that music, particularly a banjo or guitar, had power to soothe their savage breasts. At the first tinkle their grim, hard visages would relax, and pleasure would be depicted on their faces. In Orillia I was more than startled on one occasion. We were enacting a Wild West impossibility, where stage Indians entered, and after an exaggerated war dance round the comedian scalped him. I heard a terrific yell. An Indian, loaded with rum, was seated in front of the house, and this had aroused his dormant nature. The next thing I saw was the noble savage making an enforced departure, accompanied by an ignoble peace officer. The red man is not as congenial an auditor as the colored descendant of Ethiopian kings. I do not know any audience more appreciative of a comedian's vagaries than a nigger. Divested of their perfume, what pleasanter picture is there than to see, as I have often seen, the galleries of Baltimore, Richmond and the sunny South filled with five or six hundred ebony faces, and note their chasmatic mouths (resembling those of a codfish fully extended) and exhibiting rows of shining ivories, from which cavernous openings emitted a continuous Yah! Yah! Yah!

CHAPTER XXIII.

DRAMATIC AGENCY.

I remember one morning in '78, when the Bijou Opera Company had struggled as far as Rome, N.Y. (then bearing the opprobrium of being a dramatic Golgotha), that I suddenly determined, in prize-fighters' phraseology, to throw up the sponge; so, with very indefinite purpose and a more than indefinite amount of cash, I made my way, via steamboat, to the cosmopolitan city. I landed there with very little metallic substance, so depositing my wife in tolerable comfort, I wandered aimlessly around, and passing 8th street saw a sign—"Carlisle and Caverly, Dramatic Agency." I entered and found the agency in *articulo mortes*, and the landlord, sizing up the remnants, so,

catching at a straw, I enquired his rental, etc. On receiving a reply I hastened to the only friend I could find, borrowed money enough, and in two days a new banner—"The Metropolitan Dramatic Agency," hung on the outward walls. I made semblance there of business, and anxiously awaited the advent of a customer. At length one came, a long raw-boned Texan. His first query was: "Have you many people on your books?" Regardless of the fate of Ananias and Sapphira, I answered "Yes; hundreds." He was a good sample of a southern variety manager. In a few words he told me his wants, said you want your fee, threw down a twenty dollar bill, and then I commenced to search for, as he phrased it, "twenty girls, don't matter whether they have much talent or not, so they are good lookers." My commission was 10 per cent., taken out of the artists' salaries, and I shipped supplies of variety people to his circuit, comprising four houses for eighteen months. My time was now spent veritably on the jump. My clients were principally variety people, and the line of demarcation between them and actors was clearly drawn, although now adays, since the reign of farce comedy, it has been nearly worn away. They would enter the office with a jaunty air, the men bearing the distinguishing trade mark—a plug hat—and the ladies assuming an air and manner quite *prononce*. One of the earliest visitors came in smoking a villainous tenement house cigar, with clothes a little fringed at the edges, a brassy chain, showing evidence of keys attached; gloves, through the end of which an occasional finger was obtruding, and with a patronizing debonnair manner, exclaimed: "Say, do they want me in Boston or Philly?" "No," I replied, "I can perhaps put you in Hoboken next week." "Nothing less than fifty a week catches me," was his next announcement. "All right; I'll give you twelve." He went away, returned shortly after and accepted. In course of my agency season I took also management of Court Square Theatre, Brooklyn, which proved a fizzle to proprietors, and also filled in time when actors were scarce at Olympic, Hoboken, Newark, Harlem, and other theatres. In fact I was a stop gap.

Noting an advertisement in the New York *Clipper* for manager of the Third Avenue Theatre, which never seemed to pay, I applied, thinking it would benefit the agency. It was at a down town office

that I entered and stated my business. "You are about the sixteenth applicant," said a gentleman in an easy chair. "Your recommendation." "Well, I can lose money slower than the others." "All right," said the gentleman, "go to my clerk and receive your instructions," which I did. I kept the situation long enough to make the Theatre pay, and to find the owners a desirable tenant. My rule of the Theatre was strict, and I tried to keep up the standard of modesty, cleanliness and purity of tone, and paid good salaries to the elite of the variety profession, such as Pat Rooney, Big Four, Delehanty and Hengler, Miss Mayo, etc. Pat Rooney was ready witted. Early in my management some countryman of the distinguished exaggerated Hibernian threw a dried herring from the gallery. Pat looked at it a moment, then looking up at the gallery with grin, retorted, "You'll want that before Lent is through." Poor Pat; I saw his first appearance and his last, as six months ago he virtually left the stage at Wilmington, Delaware, for he left that city, accompanied by our good wishes, one day to die in New York the next. Amongst these votaries of song and dance, serio-comic vocalism, acrobatism and other adjuncts, there were many who had risen from the curbstone, which recalls a special rule I had posted in Theatre "No blasphemy, no double entendres, no appeals to the Deity allowed in this house," when a clever performer came to me and said, "Say, who is this Deity on them rules?" They are kind-hearted, I can say from experience, and I have business-managed many and various descriptions, even Jake Aberles (who had a daughter whose name as an actress was a familiar joke in N.Y.), and others in the city and rural districts. I have not been compelled to ask help from my dramatic *freres*, but some time later than this, when lying prostrate, sick and alone at the St. Charles in New York, the people who visited my bedside were all of the variety profession, and when I was helpless, with mind wandering, I saw two angels of this class soothing me who ere they departed had slipped ten dollars under my pillow. Without egotism I may say I never refused a similar kindness to any one of our sufferers if I had it. To resume, I was forwarding people to all points of the compass, but maybe I was a little too conscientious, as I tried to send the best of talent, and never, as is often the case accepted *douceur*, and furthermore, being a fellow artiste, I could not refuse temporary loans, etc., so the agency didn't amount

to much as a financial institution, except on the books. I was sorely pressed, for my wife was at this period dying of consumption, and my little girl was also cut off, with other minor troubles. During all this time I was putting on afterpieces and farces, during the action of which thoughts of my wife at home would intrude, and when the end came, with pallid death staring me in the face, I had still to put on the same idiotic grins and utter the same flashes of humour "which were wont to set the tables in a roar." Shortly after this the owners seeing an advantageous chance of disposing of their lease let the house go, and with best of wishes to me they offered me the gross receipts of the Theatre for one night for a benefit, and to this call over 150 variety people responded with their services. Finding N. Y. uncongenial, I accepted an engagement to tour with Col. Franklin Warner and his "Platoon Dancers," commencing in Baltimore, in which company I was, in conjunction with May Arnott, giving a sketch (with optical delusions) entitled "Salon du Diable," and representations of Gen. Grant. This lasted some short time and then I departed for Canada.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LAND OF EVANGELINE.

On arrival in Toronto, in 1878, I must make a confession—and honest confession is good for the soul. I accepted an engagement as stage manager of the Queen's Theatre (variety), being short of *rex pecuniarum*. The temple had been originally designed by Spackman and fitted up as a theatre when fire had burned down the Lyceum. Den. Thompson here endeavoured to whip his Josh Whitcomb into shape, but still it might be classed a *Dive*. I thought I might improve on the past, but the management would not give much scope. First part, where bad jokes and indifferent singing formed the nucleus of the entertainment, then trapezists, nigger acts, dizzy serio-comics and, occasionally, prize-fighters, finishing, probably, with a red fire melodrama. The artists were inferior, the public who patronized it

seemed to want filth, and the theatre itself was equally dirty. In fact, I heard a prize fighter, named Joe Goss, who was filling the house, once remark, on seeing the dressing-room, with strong expletives, "What an ole; it hain't fit for an og."

Being disgusted with my surroundings, I made an engagement to go to Newfoundland with Will Naunary, and arrived in due course in the capital of Nova Scotia. Halifax, with its blue-blooded Haligonians, for that is their nomenclature, makes another bitter memory. I was inveigled into becoming manager of its Academy of Music. The allurements held out were so captivating that I swallowed the bait, hook and all. Wealth was given me to go to New York and bring on a company, so I steamboated there and brought back my human freight (actors). I opened the season with "London Assurance," Helen Adell as "Lady Gay," and a fair company, including a "Jonah." Mr. Delafield was the reputed Jonah, in stage parlance one whose presence betokens evil. I had first met him in England, where his failing was litigation, which cost him the deadly enmity of Dion Boucicault, who drove him out of the country. He had probably been associated with more failures than any man of his inches—and he was tall. When I left New York I had the dismal forebodings of all the craft, which makes me digress here, commencing with a quotation from "La Mascotte."

> "Signs, omens, dreams, predictions,
> They surely are not fictions."

An actor has his whims, cranks and superstitions, and of the latter they are as numerous as mosquitoes in Jersey. The fact of walking under a ladder may be unlucky, because there is an element of danger occasionally therein, but what can be said of one standing well in the profession, who, seeing a Hunchback, would walk a mile to slyly touch his hump, as being surely provocative of good fortune. An umbrella opened upon the stage would cause the corps dramatique almost to faint with horror, whilst the fracture of a dressing-room looking-glass would entail an universal shout, "Seven years bad luck." A dead head (Anglice, a person who does not pay) entering the theatre first will, according to many, diminish the prospective receipts, and I have known a star to stop the distribution of small hand bills because they were pink (an adverse color). A celebrated

star stood at the door with me and saw a cross-eyed boy entering with a paid ticket. "Here," said he to the boy, "Is fifty cents, now go home." The boy, perplexed, left, but after the star's departure returned with another paid ticket. The house was a medium one. I told the star of the boy's action, and he replied exultingly, "I knew it—cross-eye—Jonah." Some door-keepers will not allow a woman to be the first to enter. A theatre transformed from a church is supposed to be a receptacle of misfortune. Of these I remember two in New York—one Laura Keene's and another on 8th street, both symbolical of evil. The dressing-rooms of the latter were cavernous, damp and clammy, and *on dit* that people had lain there in the sleep that knows no waking. The dressing-rooms were vaults. Mose Fiske, a genial, whole-souled comedian, would emerge from his gloomy retreat below with a grin and would remark to the underpaid fairies (who manage to put on a heavenly smile on their small salary), that he had been having a lovely communion with the spirits. To them they were of a heavenly sphere. To Mose they were *spiritus frumenti* and of the earth—earthly. Number thirteen bodes evil outside of our ranks, but hotels, where actors most do congregate, have obliterated or changed number thirteen. Again, why actors are so particular to see the moon over the left shoulder and throw spilt salt in the same direction come with other oddities from Puritan days. Their ideas are as primitive as those of a Washington negro playing policy, and Jonah is only another variety of the "Voodoo." I have gone through this catalogue as most of them occurred in this city and preceded our downfall, although I am more a believer in that "Divinity which shapes our ends." We gave the round of novelties, and after two weeks the backing of the concern was not forthcoming, and to get company back to New York and pay their salaries devolved on me but as a dramatic Hercules I was a failure. I worked like the proverbial Beaver. For the Christmas holidays George Bird and myself, tragedian and comedian, descended from the pedestal of fame and went on as pantaloon and clown, severally, in a purely English Pantomime which drew good houses. I soon discovered that the mine of patronage which I had fully worked had run out. These nights were social events. Firstly, under the patronage of Sir Patrick Macdougal, then the Lieutenant-Governor; then Sir Edmund Glover,

followed by officers of the various English regiments stationed there, including Col. Drayson, of the Engineers, a literary army authority and a fair writer of light plays; then the fleet and civil authorities, until finally I looked around for more, and could find no one more distinguished than a Hog Reeve. When at a low ebb there arrived another demoralized host from Newfoundland, who naturally sought me, and I engaged nearly all of them. Amongst them was a Halifax favorite, Frank Roche, a noble looking fellow and one of the few actors to whom tights were an addition to his personal graces. Shakespearian plays without a double, with Misses Adell, Bertha Welby, etc., failed to draw, until at last, wearied by the public lack of appreciation, I put on "Buffalo Bill," with combats, Indians and prairie fires, and nearly burnt down the theatre, but filled the Auditorium with a cultured audience. Jane Shore burlesques, etc., followed; still debts accumulated, and being hunted from pillar to post I at last learnt my first experience of prison life. There is a villainous institution called the law of "Capias," for on the mere oath of a creditor "that he has reasonable expectation that the debtor is about to leave the province," even for as small a sum as five dollars, his body is liable to remain in jail for a considerable period, unless bail can be procured, which, in the case of an actor or stranger, may be a matter of reasonable uncertainty. A critical period is generally chosen, to wit, when the actor is about to go on the stage, and I found myself one evening in the unenviable position of no pay no play. I managed to secure bail, but this was continued *ad infinitum*, until finally I took the bull by the horns, marched to jail, surrendered to my bail for about a dozen claims, and applied for a release in *forma pauperis*. I discovered to obtain release as a pauper requires money. The garrison, like good-hearted fellows, proffered to settle my debts, but I gave up my property, consisting of several hats, battered and worn, dilapidated and variegated pants and other miscellaneous effects. I found during my sojourn in that dreary pile, that amongst my predecessors had been E. Sothern, John T. Raymond, W. Naunary, and since then many other managers. I have yet to learn that it has been the means of obtaining debt, whilst it would prevent any one once away from ever bearing it in mind. My company had gone on without me to Kemptville, and I left the city without a very tender farewell.

CHAPTER XXV.

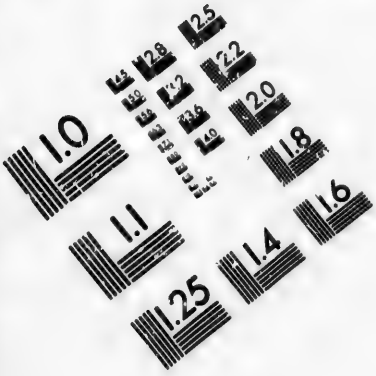
ACADIE.

Our peregrinations took us a voyage to where the poet adds his charms.

> "In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Bay of Minas,
> Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand Pré
> Lay in the fruitful valley."

In other words, we toured the land of "Evangeline," and, although Longfellow is in error in one or two instances, one finds the fruitfulness of the valley still remains, but the bulk of that fruitfulness consists of apples, which are of enormous size, whilst the dikes still remain as monuments of man's industry.

The Annapolis valley is not a rich dramatic orchard, but reaching Yarmouth we had the unusual experience of a railroad company (Western counties) peremptorily closing their traffic and leaving us isolated in that town for a month without egress, either by land or sea. During this period we produced "Pinafore," drama and burlesque, but there is one who does not become surfeited with food—dramatic or otherwise—if too plentifully administered. I had forgotten one exception—the confirmed toper, who will persist until delirium tremens or the grave ends his miseries. In fact, I have seen in the State of Maine every conceivable fiery liquid product consumed—alcohol simple, alcohol and Jamaica ginger, quinine wine, and even turpentine. It was the ending of winter, but everything frozen—the roads almost impassible—ocean boats not running—and "Othello's occupation gone." The railroad company refused even an engine, and in dire despair I appealed for the use of hand cars (or trolleys as denominated in that section), so that we might reach our next stand, Digby(famous for Digby chickens, a species of herring), which was distant some 60 miles away. Permission having ultimately been obtained, and being armed with picks and shovels six hand-cars full of live freight and dead baggage started. Twenty persons on a journey possess generally some jollity, but I never saw misery so universal. Our leader, Napoleon Gilles, a Frenchman, was humpbacked—a synonym of bad luck. Poor fellow, he was old, and when wrapped up for this journey he looked like a



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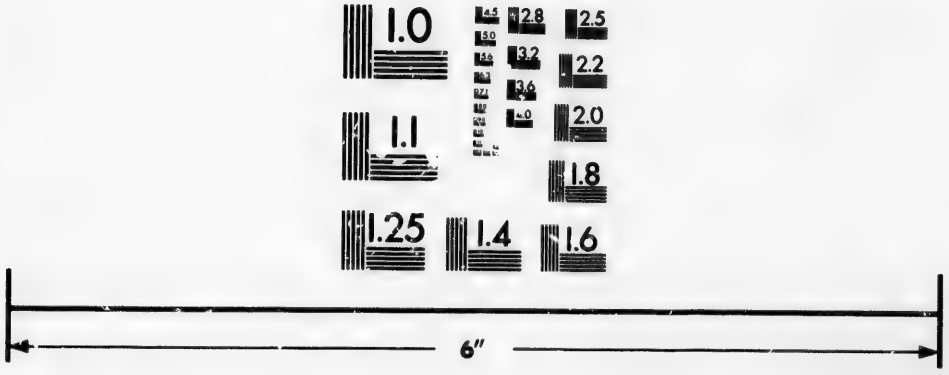

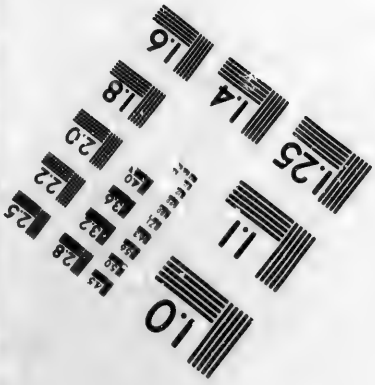

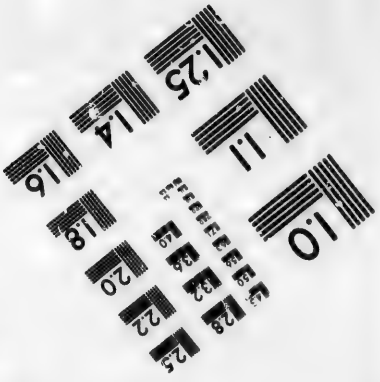

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huge bundle of clothing going to the wash, and for eighteen hours on this excursion never moved, except at Weymouth, to eat. Section men were hired but they did not prove equal to the task, so the male portion of the histrions lent their assistance in turning the crank. Sir Joseph Porter (self) took one crank, Eckert, a robust tenor, another, and Deadeye and the Bo'sun at others, relieved at occasion by the chorus. Tedious, oh, so tedious, up grade; varied occasionally by down grade, when we rattled along twenty miles an hour and allowed the cranks to whirl merrily at will, whilst the workers pulled the icicles from their moustaches. We had to clear away frozen ice and snow at points to make our way, and had neared our goal when on one of these flying descents a section hand thought he saw an obstruction ahead. He essayed to seize the swiftly revolving crank, and then I saw a form flying in the air. We hurried back two miles up hill to fetch him, and found as wofully disfigured and mangled a man as ever was seen. Gravel and ice had cut and bruised him, whilst his blood-bespattered appearance filled every one with pity. We left him at Digby, but took care that his pains and aches should be seen after, and left him there grateful to all. The Halifax papers gave us plenty of free advertising.

The forest primeval exists in this section, and the stately moose is not extinct. One of our ladies came bubbling over with joy in Yarmouth, and said, "I am going out to supper, and the landlady is going to give us moose steak." "Aha!" growled our Boniface, "Moose! Well, you've been eating moose for beef steak all last week." After a considerable pilgrimage through Windsor, Amherst, Truro and Moncton, the city famous for its "boar tide," which, although watched for, is very seldom seen by tourists, and impresses the beholder with wonder, we tried a brief sojourn in St. John, N.B., but it proved only a repetition of previous towns. The theatre there —no, it has not reached the dignity of such since the burning of the opera house in the great fire—is dirty and badly located, and having asked a lawyer's advice on a previous visit, he took the privilege on some plea, unlike Shylock, of seizing 170 pounds of flesh and depositing it in jail. *Usus secunda natura est*, so I did not feel it as acutely as heretofore, and resolved to fight it. In the long room there were awaiting trial the best of company, including one whose trial was

almost famous—a ship's captain, accused of scuttling—and a mate, guilty of homicide. All of them were gloomy, save the assassin, who was a sailor personified. He told me his story. A seaman had flatly refused to obey his orders, and in a moment of anger he struck at him, the sailor grappled, and, being the most powerful, would have got the upper hand had not the mate seen a belaying pin handy, with one blow of which he quelled the mutiny, but killed the man. On trial later he received a year's imprisonment. My legal friend, seeing I was going to remain in jail, repented and apologetically offered me freedom, hoping I would settle at some later date. In partnership with Will Naunary we now essayed "Hamlet" with E. T. Stetson over the same route, but I noted with regret that the most ebullitions of approval would arise when the grave diggers buried Ophelia, and the divine utterings of Shakespeare fell upon souls as cold as their own codfish. With many changes of actors and scene we brought up ultimately at Chatham, N.B., where the collapse came.

Moneyless, and at wits' end, I, by dint of persuasion and other people's cash, got enough to send the major portion of the company to their homes, whilst my partner, whose help I expected, hid away from us, and when I found him was playing a game called fifteen puzzle. I left him to finish the game, and do not know whether he has finished it yet. To that town I owe a deep debt of gratitude, for its denizens helped us out of the mire, and I have always received since the cordial friendship of a whole-souled, noble people.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

Can a theatre be built on a cash capital of fifty cents? Yes, if you have nerve.

It was my fortune to devise and erect the first and only one on Prince Edward Island at the capital, Charlottetown, and it may have been with a few cents more or less that I landed on its beautiful shores and commenced operations. This was in 1882. I had pre-

viously produced "Pinafore" in a market hall redolent of beef and ungodly savours, and, as it was summer, flies of varied dimensions and colors. No performance ever drew as large a house, and probably never will. The scenic effects were limited, and the auditorium, although unlimited as to quantity, was bestial in quality. I had from this trip always carried with me the idea that the people deserved better, so here I was to remedy this evil, but how? I discovered an ancient building called the Athenæum. I leased it and commenced building operations—on promises. By dint of multifarious loans and an occasional appeal to a money lender I saw the Academy of Music assuming changed proportions. The Athenæum, as changed, now had an excellent stage, new gallery, fine scenery, admirable gas appliances, and everything *en regle*, including private boxes. The inhabitants, as I first knew them, were somewhat dull theatrically. The "Two Orphans," with its snow scene, transfixed them with surprise. "Our Boys," and all the comedy school, I presented in routine. To amuse the older members I announced "Freemasonry Exposed," and issued handbills announcing "that enormous pressure had been put upon me to prevent my exposure of the craft, but that undeterred by the fate of Morgan and others, I would give a full exhibition of the working of the various degrees, together with the rites, grips, &c., and stated when it would occur with my name at foot. On the ensuing day an elderly gentleman sent for me in the parlor of the hotel, closed the door, and then asked me where I got my knowledge of masonry. I gave him the information. "And you are going to expose the secrets of the order?" "Undoubtedly," I replied. He arose with anger in every feature, and exited with the remark, "You'll be sorry." During the day I noted several citizens glaring at me as I passed by, but on the evening of the show I peeped through the usual curtain hole and saw the gallery full of well dressed men. Each one had a cane. They did not seem to bear a jubilant look, but one rather of fixed determination. The house was full and Masonry was an after-piece, but anyway the preceding play dragged. Everybody seemed as though they were waiting to club somebody, but we reached their object at last. Curtain drew up on a smart individual (self) talking in a street to a hayseed. Smart individual tries to be funny. (No smiles.) Finally comes to "Hecuba." "Do you want to be a mason?" (Few hisses.)

'Yes!" "All right; come on and get the first degree." (Louder hisses.) Flats drew off, and there was the first degree—goat, compasses, globes, big eye and all. I gave the apprentice the introductory lecture; then followed his initiation, down sliding platforms, &c., and in the midst of a solemn obligation he was walked over a trap and disappeared midst red fire and detonators. This was too much for the masons, who had monopolized the gallery. They chuckled, roared, and all hands were pointed to the elderly gentleman who had waited upon me two days before, but who now flushed with anger—crawled away. Money is not over plentiful on the Island, and my private boxes never obtained but two patrons—one, Lieutenant-Governer Haviland, a most genial gentlemen, and the other the Marquis of Lorne. By dint of economy I was paying off a goodly portion of encumbrances. I also introduced through this country Archibald Forbes, the war correspondent, who gave his lecture—"Royal People I have met." He was a prince of men, but could not read to suit the temperament of *oi polloi*, and yet the subject matter was far superior to others. On one occasion I was at the door—terms were high—fifty cents. A farmer and his wife strolled in for the show. Upon the stage there was the stand, four wax tapers blooming thereon, also a silver urn and goblet, with other appurtenances, and as a backing there was a highly painted Gothic chamber. He paid a dollar; went up stairs; returned in a minute. "What's up there? I thought it was a concert; what denomination is your man?" "I said, Presbyterian." "No, sir; you can't fool me, I want none of your altars and such like fixings in mine, I want my money back." And he got it. I had several judicial trials, and was put on the limits (i.e., could not leave the city unless I forfeited bail), but the lawyers all seemed my friends, and I might as well add the general public of the whole Island. I never met more noble men, whether as regards physique or simplicity of heart, than those same raw-boned descendants of "Auld Scotia," and I have mingled with them from the rough and rugged coast of Souris to Tiguish, and admired their industry and good qualities. There is one difficulty, that is, inter-communication in the winter. The Northern Light steamer, although a marvel of force, cannot get over the ice when packed in the straits, as I have discovered by being stuck fast in it. The boat

is constructed to mount the ice, and from its peculiar shape (cigar) and weight, together with its sharp edge cut through—all useless when in packed ice—but this is heavenly compared to crossing over from Cape Tormentine on small ice boats, where working your passage is a misnomer, for one should be paid for attempting it. In summer all is beautiful. A trip on schooner from Summerside to Chatham through the Northumberland Straits and up the Miramichi is worth living for, even if becalmed, as we were, whilst we filled the vacuum by catching mackerel, of whom hundreds of schools could be seen—or else deep fishing for the rapacious cod. There is one peculiar advertisement which greets the reader of an Island newspaper. Nearly all farms are heralded thus: "Farms to let near mud." Mud is not considered a desideratum by most farmers, but here it means wealth. It is the mud of the ocean or river rich in fertilizing material.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE TROPICS.

An advertisement in the New York *Mirror*, headed "A Winter in the Tropics," caught my optics in winter of '82. Being then free, I put in application for comedy, made terms, and soon found myself *en route*. The Atlas line of steamers on which we sailed are not exactly ocean greyhounds, but they are comfortable. After leaving the cape of ill omen, Hatteras, the run is generally delightful, whilst you may indulge in the pleasure of a call at some coral island—say Inagua—and get your first glimpse of nature's prodigality. Then, what view is more gorgeous than the first sight of Jamaica, West Indies, with the magnificent bay on which stands Kingston, and the vision of stately cocoanut and palmetto trees, and the gigantic blue mountains towering to the clouds with a clear atmosphere that seems ozone purified. What if the heat be unusual, there is so much that is novel and brilliant that all discomfort is forgotten. Again, there is that peculiarity which strikes all foreigners, the fact that every-

thing seems to be full of life. Look upon any shrub or tree and you will see myriads of lizards and other insect life moving perpetually and changing their color as they move, whilst the air is full of fragrance. My first smile was caused by a sight of the senile "Johnny Crow" or vulture, and although familiar with the buzzard in the Southern States, yet I think there is a vein of humor in the crow. As I have noted them on a wet day, resting on house-top, miserable and woe-begone, they remind me of a first old man cast for a bad part.

Kingston must be the new Jerusalem, for the bulk of the white people are of that race, and even many of the negroes present an anomalous look, bearing, as some of them do, a proboscis reminiscent of the tribe of Judah. The Jews are the cream of the island, and are good-natured, courteous and liberal. The local government is peculiar, as they have little or no representation, being ruled almost directly from Great Britain, whilst there are generally warships in the harbor and a regiment or more of soldiers to keep the natives in check—a necessary precaution, as the memory of the black insurrection and its horrors in Morant Bay fully proves. The Custos (*custos rerum*) is the synonym for Mayor, whilst negro policemen, officered by semi-military inspectors, are the local conservators of order. The Theatre Royal is tolerably cool, being furnished with wooden shutters or blinds. And a fountain adorns the pit. A play bill is somewhat of a curiosity, inasmuch as one would read it as a glorification of the notable personages of the island. Ours was headed under the patronage of Sir Francis Musgrave, Governor, followed by a list of twenty other celebrities—Generals, Colonels, Captains, &c., terminating with a list of the local authorities. They favored tragedy, and will recall to strangers' memory Ed. Eddy, who was popular and finished his earthly career here, his body having been shipped to his Bowery home by the F.A.M., of which he was an honored member. With the negroes "Hamlet" appears to be the favorite play—probably the ghost appeals more vividly to their crude imagination. A more lazy, yet more civil, generation does not exist, and not one will pass a white person without bow or courtesy. The thermometer theatrically is sometimes unusually warm. When playing "Bunthorne" in Patience, I changed every rag between the acts, as perspiration

had wet them thoroughly, and on the same evening, when performance was over, when I went to put on my street shoes a scaly scorpion was ensconced therein, proving incontestibly the varied insectiferous character of the country. Furthermore, a few days later, I had the undesirable honor of having a "shiggar" make his home underneath my toe nail. An usual titillation of the big toe induced me to investigate, and my doctor, an aged darkey, prescribed, or rather indulged in a surgical operation, for she introduced a needle under the nail and produced a small insect, which, she informed me, if not removed, would lay eggs, and these hatching into life would eat away my toe. I replied that I had no desire to use either my big or little toe as an incubator. The table may not suit all, but to me it was delicious. Abundance of fruit, including the luscious mango (to eat which, with good form, is a scientific acquirement), pine apples and banana, which are the *bona fide* fruit, sweet sop and countless other dainties, and for a change new cocoanut with new rum introduced. Fish, which ere cooked, have the handsomest gold and silver scales; turtle, which would make an alderman's mouth water; turtle eggs, or rarer luxury, turtle liver, are good enough for me.

The actor is not a despised human, for his society is sought for, and poker is not one of the lost arts either, for on Sundays the Hebrews most do congregate, and with its aid pass time and money away.

One friend of mine, a Canadian named Wales, who had settled from Markham, suggested a day's shooting, but our day was a new departure. Starting at 4 a.m. to be cool, we hied away to a Pen (Anglice Park), owned by some nabob, and then meandered seawards to shoot ground doves. I proved my dexterity by killing the prettiest feathered kingfisher imaginable, and seeing in the distance moving objects, which I thought resembled ducks, bang went the gun, and then I heard the shots rattle on their backs and saw a hurried scamper, whilst my companion, shrieking with laughter, shouted, "Those are landcrabs." After killing our quantum of birds we started homewards, picking our way over prickly cacti, which forms the only fence here that will keep out their attentuated black kangaroo looking pigs, perspiring and puffing, finally taking a tumble in a

river, and arriving late at rehearsal jaded and fagged, and with clothes which would be a passport for a tramp.

The soldiers are the First and Second West Indian Regiments, which serve alternately, and are colored men, and herein lies a bulwark of England's eternal greatness. Pure Africans, big, burly and tall, they are recruited from Sierra Leone, and look with contempt on their prototypes here, and officered by British can be thoroughly relied upon to keep in awe their transplanted degenerated brethren. This shows the power of England, as it can keep its dependencies in subjection by simply using the troops of one nationality to awe the other into obedience and *vice versa*.

Here is a city where the sun is all powerful, where negroes preponderate, and yet the streets bear the palm for cleanliness, and this, too, despite the fact that the drainage is almost all superficial. This may be owing to their excellent waterworks arrangements, the streets being regularly washed. There is a gradual slope to the sea, and should any carrion or refuse matter remain thereon the vulture is ever ready to bear it away. The "Yellow Jack," as described in Capt. Marryat's novels, is not the scourge it was formerly. The climate, though hot, is not unbearable, although it conduces to apathetic ease, as one reverend father from Belgium remarked to me, who was dying from consumption, "I came because it is easier to die here."

The greatest conflagration Kingston ever suffered occurred during our stay. Conversing with a knot of men, including the "Custos," on Main street, we noted a slight fire a short distance away. Knowing the wind was blowing inshore, I ventured the remark, "Here's a a prospect of a big fire." "Oh no," replied one of the bystanders, "Our fire department will soon stop it." At this moment on they came, black as Erebus, with noise and yell, dragging fire appurtenances, somewhat resembling the "Darktown Brigade," the man with the trumpet making his presence felt and heard more than all the rest. It was easy to perceive that no brigade, even if furnished with all the modern appliances, could cope with this fire. The bulk of the houses were but kindling wood for the destruction of the mammoth stores which fell with lightning rapidity. So called fire-proof buildings withstood for a time, but finally their galvanized iron roofs

would begin to curl and twist with the intense heat, and then the fire pouring in made them an easy prey. Gigantic store-rooms full of rum next followed, within which would be heard occasional explosions arising from the bursting of the rum puncheons, the contents of which would mount heavenward in flame. Oh, what a feast of joy to a teetotaler. No check to its mad career, and if you turned your head you would see it raging half a mile away, borne thence by the flying embers. The whole population on the streets, soldiers pushing to and fro, sailors pulling down buildings, niggers everywhere full of rum, negresses on their knees crying aloud, "Judgment on our sins," men cursing and women in tears, others bearing away their "Lares and Penates," whilst hundreds of the colored race might be seen bearing relics of other ages to the park for salvation. Through all this there was an unspoken dread lest the negroes should rise, making this calamity their opportunity, and rapine murder and death ensue. There was only one power to avert total extinction—the hand of God—for lo the wind changes, and what man's puny efforts could not stem is arrested by the gentle wind from heaven, but leaving two-thirds of the city a blackened pile of smouldering ashes. On the next morning in the park might be seen encamped hundreds of the colored population. Everything looked black. In the streets lay cod fish black and burnt—hams ditto. On the wharves oranges looked like cannon balls, and charred fragments everywhere, whilst above and around the city were thousands of vultures like Caius Marius over the ruins of Carthage, and their call might seem symbolical of "Delenda est Carthago."

I had omitted to mention anything about the company, but it was efficient, inasmuch as we gave the whole Shakespearian repertoire, although the tragedian, Mr. W. Burrows, unwisely terminated his engagement with Shylock, which, to an audience composed almost exclusively of Israelites, was not giving them their fair pound of flesh. "Hazel Kirke" awoke them to enthusiasm, and in farces like "The Toodles" I became popular, but after the fire our star was dimmed, so we sailed once more the ocean blue, and after few stops arrived in New York.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ALICE OATES.

In January, '83, I was looking around for a new field, when big burly Frank Dobson accosted me on Broadway with the abrupt salutation, "Do you sing?" In common honesty I could not say "yes," but replied, "No; I howl, but I have once played General Boum." He said: "I would like to engage you for comedian with Alice Oates. Did you ever play with her?" I informed him that when her husband, Jem, was alive and she was a girl, that I had assisted them to produce "Field of Cloth of Gold," when she starred under the name of Mlle. Orsini. "That's funny," said he, "I want to do it now and am booked, but I—I"—then he looked at me and said—"I should like to have you if I thought you would keep from drink."

The members of the theatrical profession are liable to be misconstrued more than any other class. It is a matter of surprise, too, how an impression clings to the public. I say this from personal experience. I never was a disciple of Bacchus, although I could occasionally take a glass of beer or wine. Spirits were always my abomination, and yet I read in a newspaper this year: "Harry Lindley, the veteran comedian, is playing in Quebec. Our players of twenty years ago will remember him; he was a comedian in the fullest acceptation of the term, but alas, it was the old, old story." Thus giving its readers the idea that, like many others, I had drunk too much of the wine when it was red. I have always had poor brains for drinking, and for more than eight years have been a total abstainer. If any actor or actress should be incapacitated by paresis or other misery, it is customary for the public and profession to say, with shrugging shoulders—pity—drink. I will call a halt here to make one enquiry. Whence this paresis? It did not exist twenty years ago, and now—common. If it be gradual softening of the brain, may it not arise from the eternal use of grease paints on the face? I am not now saying that actors do not drink, but the public will not tolerate a drunkard as formerly. One can recall J. M. Mortimer, whose faults and vagaries were overlooked for years in

New York City, but the end came, and yet another who increased notoriety and money by his hilarious freaks—in fact used them for advertising purposes. I have heard the fair fame of women besmirched in this and other manner, but a fair judgment will concede the fact that although there may be black sheep in the flock, there are others of darker hue in upper ten and lower five of our land. To return—I disabused Dobson's mind and became stagemanager and adapter for Alice Oates Opera Company, and can safely say that as far as my knowledge went she was more "sinned against than sinning" by the world's lying tongues. On this tour, playing through the South, we were favored by good fortune, and my adaptations of "Field of Cloth of Gold," which I had operaticized, and "Conrad the Corsair," were received with encomiums. I left her the end of spring, as I had arranged a summer tour of my own. I will, however, add, that although the chorus and principals consisted of twenty-eight people, and Opera Bouffe companies are supposed to be loud, that no taint of shame followed the organization for the four months I managed them. She died in Philadelphia in 1888.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DOMINICK MURRAY.

I was summering in Ontario and living lazily on the banks of Niagara River, where old Niagara town, with its memories of strife, now seems to be in abnormal sleep. Its inhabitants are relics of former times, and remain as quaint as when I first went there, some twenty-five years ago, and saw probably the last pigeon roost, when every inhabitant, armed with guns, sticks and stones, sallied forth to bring down the birds that literally darkened the sky. There in quiet, almost unheeded, lives as learned a book-worm as one could find, who, with his poems and novels of Chien d'Or, displays erudition of past days, unsurpassed. Here I by letter obtained an engagement with Dominick Murray, the eminent character actor, and opened in the fall of '83 in New York City.

Mr. Murray is an actor of the earnest school. His training was in England, but he achieved the greatest successes in the Antipodes and America. Thirty years ago Londoners conceded him the palm as a character actor by his remarkable impersonation of the snake-like Michael Free in "Arrah na Pogue." It had been often thought his range would be limited to such portraits, but his rendition of Micky Feeney soon disabused their minds, for his Irishman has the savour of the native bog, and is the nearest approach to Levers' ideals. His range is not limited to Irish, for he has a perfect knowledge of Scotch and other dialects, and there is one part fresh in my remembrance, a Lancashire striker, which, although a minor one, rose to tragedy in his hands. This was in the "Rajah" at Madison Square. His power of acting with his eyes is wonderful, and it seems a travestie on art to find a man possessed of the divine afflatus making his fortune out of a lumber chest of dramatic situations. "Escaped from Sing-Sing." To those who have seen the play it is needless to recapitulate, but it may be as well to state that its principal incident is the escape of a convict across the Hudson river by means of a decoy duck which has a rubber tube attached to it, and by means of which the escaped prisoner breathes and swims under water to the other side of the stream. His changes of character are its sole recommendations to mercy, as they are perfect portraits, but the Scotchman is undoubtedly the most natural. He has, like Fred. Robson, the capabilities of legitimate tragedy with the same deficiency —stature – yet he has been seen to advantage in Shylock, and in his later impersonations there is the evidence of tragic force. We drew enormous houses in New York, Boston and Philadelphia, but on one night, stands with the roller skating craze, we were not so successful, but we looked for better things, as we were booked for Chicago for three weeks, opening with a Sunday matinee. This Sunday business did not exactly suit the star or his subordinates, but managers insist and money is the lure. I, however, did what might be considered mean before I left the city. Having personal objections and some little religious scruples, I interviewed one of the leading newspapers (pretty well officered by Canadians I had met), and therein placed a column of objections to Sunday performances. In the article I made one contrast, which was probably a startler: "Chicago gives seven

evening performances and probably Sunday and three other matinees. Boston gives six evening and two afternoon performances. Result—Boston managers all wealthy, actors' salaries large, and performers invited to domestic homes. Chicago managers, with few exceptions, far from wealthy, and the professors of the art looked upon with distrust. This demonstrates that there is no gain pecuniarily, morally and physically from Sabbath desecration." The law and order people have in vain tried to suppress them, but managers should remember that the early closing movement did not curtail the sale of goods in stores, as people had to purchase at other times, and the two large houses caught on Sunday would be obtained during the week. The supposition is they would obtain more, for there is a section who withhold patronage on this account. During our second week a tragic event occurred. An English actor of repute, Ed. Arnott, who had been an importation of Lester Wallack, but who had since become a victim of alcohol, importuned Mr. Murray for money, who gave him some to tide over his urgent wants. Next morning I was sent for by his wife, who stated that he was locked in and had a razor in his possession. A policeman was there. I said, "Break open the door." The gentleman in blue replied, "He has a razor." Razor or no razor I kicked in the door, and there sat the mortal remains of a gifted light comedian with throat gashed from ear to ear—a sickening and sorrowful sight. The actors' fund buried him.

Chicago is the headquarters of, as Shakespeare expresses it, "There be land rats and water rats—I mean Pirates." A Pirate is one who surreptitiously obtains stolen copies of popular plays and then vends them to smaller managers. The term, although hurled at these small fry, might, sometimes with justice, be applied to the larger. Let me analyze the material used by Lotta—say Little Nell (Dickens)—or one of her early successes, the "Little Detective," written by poor Hazlewood, who never received anything for his work. or Maggie Mitchell, whose plays have been all pirated from the German, or the delineators of Monte Cristo, or Augustin Daly, who has stolen the German drama bodily, and they will say who are guiltless. Have Mrs. Wood or Mrs. Beecher Stowe received a dole for their money-makers—East Lynne or Uncle Tom. The French stage has been bodily robbed of its treasures, and one dare swear that the author of

"Les deux Orphalines" has received but meagre thanks let alone cash. The farce comedies are merely rehash of English farce, nigger acts and pantomime—sensational dramas are nearly all revamps. If a fast mail starts its career, as a sequence there arrives Express Mail, Danger Signals or Main Line, all revelling in wealth of engines, with pirated ideas of "Under the Gaslight," which, in its turn, has been pirated from another drama, of which the name has departed, but it is of Royal Vic extraction. Years ago I arranged, or rather pirated from four other dramas, a play called "Broke Jail." A few years ago I saw it repirated into "Ten Thousand Miles Away." Given almost any sensational drama of the day and its precursors may be found easily, thus verifying the adage, "There is nothing new under the sun," particularly the dramatic sun.

Our season with Mr. Murray terminated a little earlier than expected, owing to that disagreeable enemy, the gout, which left our star in Cincinnati without a leg to stand upon, so we bad adieu to him with regret.

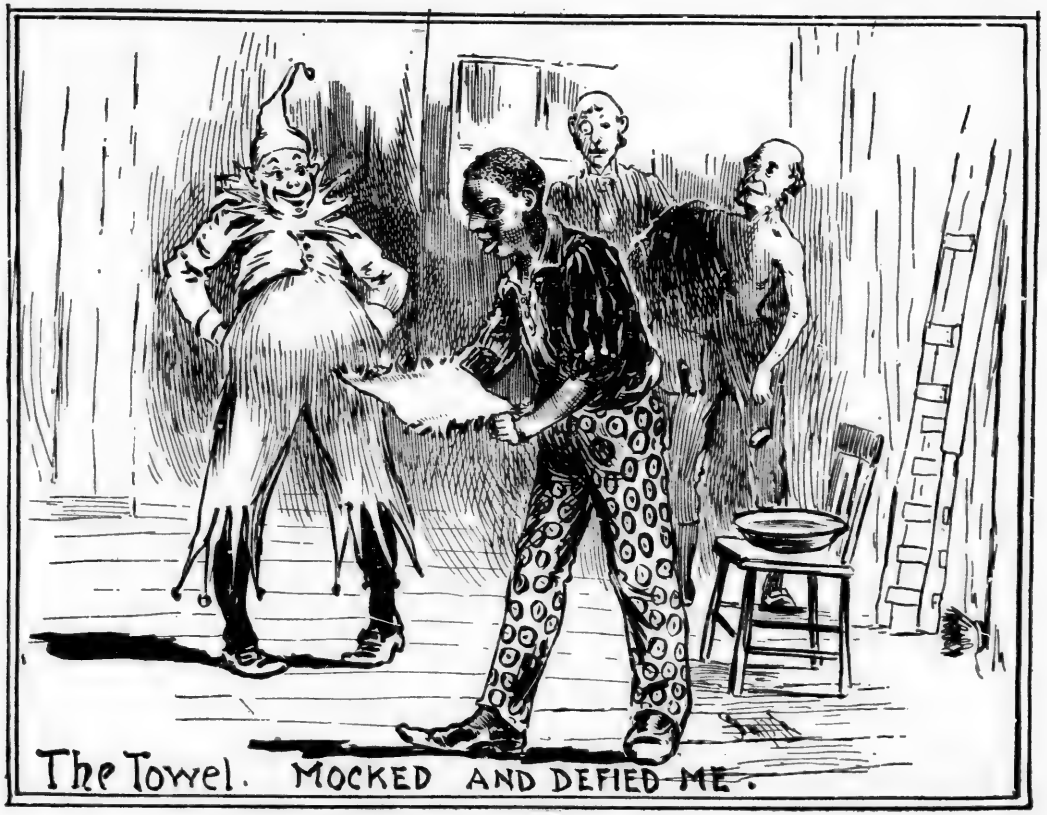
CHAPTER XXX.

JUMPS.

To the ordinary actor now-a-days, there is so much constant change that the very variety of scene and place becomes surfeiting. A resident of Niagara Falls, by constant association, looks upon the mighty cascade as an ordinary man would look upon a puddle. So in the last few years, with constant change from the Bay of Fundy to Georgia, or ten to twelve States of the Union, with three or four Canadian Provinces thrown in as a soupeon, the mind ceases to long for changes, but rather pines for rest. Some five or six years ago we commenced our tour at St. Andrews, N.B., for a coast trip, thence by boat to Eastport, Maine, where the real (?) French Sardine is packed in foreign looking cans. You will find on minute investigation that the herrings have three distinct names—small, Sardines, larger, Sardines, largest, Ocean Trout. Should the fish be running money is

plentiful, and you must not be surprised if the reserved seats are captured by boys redolent of fish and oil. Following this came a pilgrimage to the Island of Grand Manan, which looks inhospitably grand with its rugged cliffs, from whose height you may probably look out upon the ocean and see whales sporting, and hear the fishermen lament that they will drive away the herrings, and at night your utmost efforts will be taxed to gain a smile. From thence we sailed in a schooner specially chartered for Machiasport, Maine, which we never reached. The rudder was lost just off the Island in the Rip, as it is called, in other words the meeting of the tides, when our bark was tempest tossed until all were sick, but improvising another, after thirty hours constant buffeting by the waves, in turmoil and misery we reached, in utter ignorance of our locality, a small village called Cutler. Then followed drama under difficulties in fishing villages, like Jonesport or Millville, where the audience were so susceptible that any semblance of emotion or tenderness in a scene would elicit noisy guffaws of merriment, and a kiss or embrace receive ejaculatory ahs! and ohs! In one of these villages, police being an unrecognized necessity, I hired the bully of the district to keep order in the theatre, a dollar being his remuneration. Everything quiet until after a burst of laughter, which was worked, for I saw my Herculean friend dragging out by sheer brute force one of the smilers. followed immediately by his ejection of another. I slipped out at back and asked him what on earth he was doing. "All right," said he, "I'm earning my dollar. Nobody laughs at you this night if I know it." Town after town, similar experience, till we reached Old town, where the lumbermen visit you with caulks (nails in boots), which make indentations representing cribbage peg holes in the floor, and there one gentleman handed me his purse at the door, requesting me to open it and deduct the fee. I said, "Why don't you do it yourself?" To which he courteously answered, "Wall, you see I can't; last night Bill Jones bit off the end of my thumb." Thence to Bangor, Waterville and Augusta, the capital, the one city of Maine to which my longing heart often recurs. J. G. Blaine has his name on a door plate there now, and if I could, mine should adorn another.

A company, headed by Zeffie Tilbury, with a very red-headed agent, on one occasion tried hard to injure my business. Said agent,

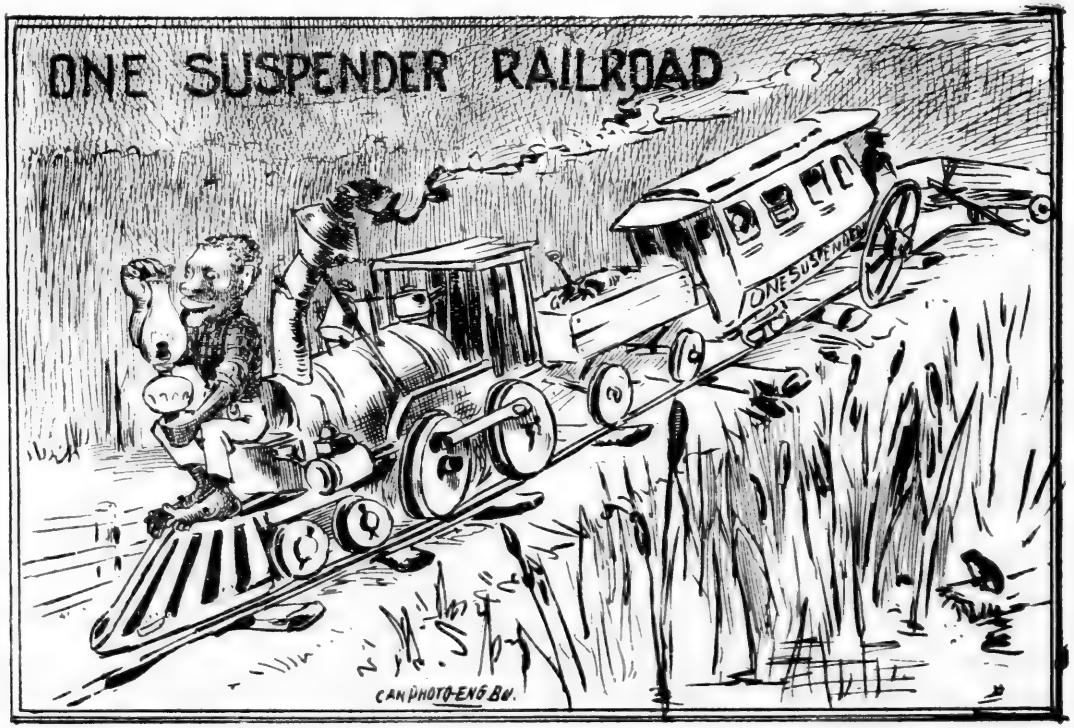


The Towel. MOCKED AND DEFIED ME.

although his company was to appear a week behind me, was, on my opening day, billing as if life depended on it, and at noon I found him at the large factory putting out his programmes. I stood beside him, and as the employees, nearly all French-Canadians came out, I spoke to them in their own patois, extolling my own show of that evening and denouncing him as a fraud, to his utter bewilderment and my own profit. Onward, still onward through circuits in Massachusetts, etc., like Joe Noyes, where you have to wait for pay day, and thence through Jersey, where it seems to me the glass-makers were always on strike; thence to Atlantic City, which is certainly emblematic of jollity, and down to Chester, Pa., which had for a janitor, Fred. St. Leger, a good fellow, but the local gamins have baptized him "Hard Face," and so on to Wilmington, Deleware, where there is one theatre too many, and by easy stages to Alexandria, and thence to one of the unholy cities, Norfolk, Va. The diet on a trip like this will strike one as varied. Maine has no bread scarcely, it is hot biscuits, and I have sat down to breakfast in small town where hot mince pie was the star, whilst pork and beans were never absent, and as you get southward you see in Virginia and North Carolina eternal corn bread and pork and fried chicken, and find that sweet potatoes are recognized familiar, every meal, friends, so that it is absolutely necessary that good digestion should wait on appetite. The dialect is liable to almost as many changes, for even the days of "Du Tell" and "I want to know" are not departed, and more southerly you find "Where are you going at?" and further on the interpolation of the word "all" into nearly every sentence is not obsolete, whilst the word "carry" is misplaced woefully, to wit, a gentleman proudly informed me that "Last evening he carried four ladies to the opera," and another that he "Had carried a full rigged ship from Elizabeth City to Wilmington," rather a muscular effort if taken literally. However, they have the word "tote," which is euphonious and expressive enough in lieu of carry. The tour from Norfolk southward is varied by uncomfortable railroads, bad hotels and worse halls. One hotel in Elizabeth City is kept by a former lighthouse keeper—Captain by courtesy—who, as he presides at the serving of dainties, will continually inform you of his advantages, as thus: "You don't get fed this way north!" "What do you think of them turnips?" etc. Taking

this route you will find, as you reach Edenton, North Carolina and the Sound, fishing on a mammoth scale, as the seines are pulled in by steam, and anything less than a horse windlass would be considered *infra dignatate*. To reach Little Washington one has to take the cars from Jamesville over the most primitive or dilapidated railroad. We rebaptised it "The one suspender railroad." It is about forty miles long. Its rolling stock consists of one old-time locomotive, which breaks down once every two weeks; a worked-over street car and a flat car, whilst I have seen a nigger used as a head light, inasmuch as he sat on front of locomotive holding a lantern and peering ahead to see if the rails had spread or departed bodily into the swamp, and I have known the engineer to keep train awaiting whilst he and his colored aides got off and sawed wood. The conductor is express agent, civil engineer, repair shop, baggage man and his own auditor. He was a whole-souled Englishman whom I had met in Worcestershire, so he insisted on stopping his train at Diamond City (two houses in a swamp), where he resided, and allowed the passengers to view the scene whilst we ate dinner. I have patronized the route on several trips, but the programme never varied, except once, when the engine parted and went to Washington—ten miles—without our company.

A ride up the Tar river does not present much diversified scenery, but Tarboro, at its head, is a progressive town, and Raleigh, the capital, is as prettily located a city as man could desire, with the best of people tenanting it, and the old southern spirit of chivalry still extant in their bosoms. In Raleigh there stands on a back street a dilapidated looking two-story frame house, which a friend of mine said was formerly the house of President Andrew Johnson. Anyway, it would be a fitting addition to the World's Fair. As this tour is almost an epidemic with me of late years, I must be excused if I do not particularize as to dates. My friend, Will Hunter, of Goldsboro, N.C., has, like myself, a love for canines, and at his excellent hostlery he had a pack of fox hounds, a St. Bernard, two coyotes and about forty other kinds, whilst in addition he has a musee of curiosities of *ante bellum* times, and if anything could be more amusing than to see his hounds chase a jaded fox, who will finally take refuge in a tree, I want to see it.


ONE SUSPENDER RAILROAD
ONE SUSPENDER
CAN PHOTO-ENG. BU.

In New Berne, N.C., I have many friends, and have for some years visited the State game, fish and oyster fair there. On one of my visits it was my lot to arrive with the memory of a "Red Stocking Female Minstrels," fresh in their remembrance. The manager met me at depot, and his first exclamation was, "Sorry you came; the legs have killed the business; nothing will draw." I felt of the same opinion, but genial Governor Fowle (he died in office last year, regretted by all), was in the city, I solicited his name as a patron, but it was an impossibility. I then asked if he would allow his daughter, Miss Helen, to come. "Certainly," said he. I rushed to office for sale of reserved seats; marked twelve seats off the plan with the magic words "Miss Helen Fowle" underneath, placed it in the window, and as a result had the house crowded with the *elite*. It has been said there is no aristocracy in America, but this is an instance which goes to prove that there is the same rush after noble personages which characterizes the *effete monarchies*. During their last fair the rush of people was so great that hotels were unattainable, having been booked for weeks ahead. Actresses and actors did not long for a small room with five or six in it, so, as a *derucier resort*, I asked the W.M. of the Masonic fraternity for the loan of the lodge and anterooms, who kindly consented. There I ensconced the company with improvised beds and accompaniments, and was tortured every few minutes with the child artiste who wanted to see the goat. This lodge has one of the oldest charters in America, and it seemed a desecration for us to cook oysters, tea, beefsteak and other edibles and liquids in a chamber rich in ancient memories, and on a carpet presented by General Ben. Butler, as the furniture was destroyed during the war, when this building was used for a hospital. Underneath the theatre, even now, may be seen a quantity of unused coffins, which were made by contract and too small at that for the slain of the rebellion. It is a dictum of the Declaration of Independence that all men are born equal. But separate coaches on railroads, separate places in theatres, separate schools, attest the inequality of the colored race, and I would not care to see it otherwise. I once rode on the cars with a law maker, "Congressman O'Hara," of Kinston (known as the black district), who was compelled, as are his less learned brethren, to ride in the second class. He is thoroughly African in appearance,

and gave me this anecdote, which he seemed to enjoy: "In Charleston the Congressman was taking a drink when two Milesian sailors, half intoxicated, came in, they insisted on his drinking, then one asked his name. 'O'Hara,' was the reply. 'O'Hara,' repeated the tar. 'How long have you been here?' 'Three days.' 'Three days!' and that complexion. 'Let's get aboard; I'm an O'Brien, but by the hokey I'll not stay three days to see an O'Brien with the complexion of a nager.'"

Following this we go southward through Georgia, and detour back, by the inland route, north with but little advantage.

CHAPTER XXXI.

NORTH.

I have always made it a point, if practicable, to breathe Canadian air in the summer. So, if my business was booming or not in more southern latitudes, I would take a flying trip north. Twenty-four years ago in Canada I was the *avant courier* in Barrie, Collingwood, Owen Sound, &c., and I have kept them always in my view. Of late years I have become a pioneer further north.

From Bracebridge I have crossed multifarious lakes for pleasure and profit, and no prettier lakes exist than in the Muskoka district, and their number is legion. From Huntsville I have traversed to the end of one lake only to find it repeated and repeated with others. Bracebridge always seemed to me to be Little England. It is a resort for the descendants of the aristocracy, who find happiness here at less expense than in the Old Country, and, in deference to "'ome," the principal hostelry bears the glowing title of "The British Lion." Of course there is the inducement of bass fishing all through this country. 'Twas here, as my comedian tells, that one evening, walking pensively along the road, he stopped to note an Irishman with clothes threadbare, dusty and worn. His shoulders bore the conventional stick and bundle, and his mouth was adorned with a black dhudeen. Just then appeared a small section of a brass band, composed of two horns and

a big drum, which preceded a small contingent of sinners with flag and tambourines. The Irishman enquired: "Phwat's that?" to which the reply was given that it was the Salvation Army. He ruminated a few minutes and then ejaculated: "Well, that's a quuare religion. Thirty years ago we only had two religions—Catholics and Protestants, and now we have the Jews and the Salvation Army."

I have crossed these lakes to get to Parry Sound, but prefer the route from Penetanguishene via. steamer. The 1000 Islands are a national glory, but up here in the Georgian Bay there are thirty-six thousand. I never counted them, but I've struck the top of one of them in a small steamer with a narrow escape from "Davy Jones." The scenery is certainly the wildest and most romantic that can be conceived, and in summer you will see tourists' white tents dotting these innumerable resting places. Parry Sound itself is remote enough, and yet in civilization, for good hotels are there and the buzz of saw mills, but the Indians—rum-icized—still wander in its precincts. One of my children was born here and bears the name of a reverend father, who, for energy, perseverance and self-sacrifice is respected by all denominations—"Pere Laboreau," of Penetang. To the surprise of everybody I have here played for two weeks at a time, and found that my audience had culture enough to appreciate only the most refined productions. I have tried Bying Inlet also, and lived on rocks, for such is its location. The rush was so great for one week there that I built dressing rooms in the air, and sold a flour barrel, four people standing on it, for $2; the ticket table for $5, and the door taken off the hinges and sold for $5. I was also the first in North Bay and Sudbury. One is surprised to find in these towns, where stumps are still occasionally prevalent in the principal streets, the best class of people, and a local bookstore man informed me in Sudbury that his customers (miners) were not to a dollar if books suited their wants. Mark, I have gone through these regions with twenty people, even in towns like Mattawa, where colossal boulders adorn the streets, and where Colonel Rankin once held solitary sway as Hudson Bay representative, but which will ere long loom into importance, as behind it there is the partially developed, but rich country around Lake Tamiscamingue. There must be rich minerals around this town, but do not mention gold. The inhabitants have

been SALTED. Then there are other towns of similar description all through the North, where the people have not been soured or disgusted by the influx of worse natures, and, therefore, will give kindly welcome to the poor player. There the "dead head" has not yet been invented, which recalls a fact that occurred to me in Morrisburgh this winter. I was in my bedroom with wife and children when a rap at door was followed by the entrance of a muscular looking christian with high boots well mudded and a yellowed overcoat and multiferious whiskers. He effusively rushed in, took my hands with horny grip and said: "Well, Harry, I am so glad to see you." I am a little nonplused, but I have met so many people that it does not do to hesitate, so I responded, "So am I; you're looking well," awaiting some clue. "By thunder, you're getting fat. I like to see my friends get on." No thread or clue. I think in vain. "And that's your wife. She ain't looking so well." I imagine this must be some intimate friend, but no vision of the past appears, so I followed with, "Ah, yes, I'd almost forgotten, where did we last meet?" He responds, "Why, you know Sherbrooke, me and you had drinks together at the Magog ten years ago." I inwardly utter long time between drinks—wishing him far, far away. "Them's your children, eh? What's this uns name? "Mystic." "Gosh, that's an all-fired rum name. And tother little girl." "Laboreau," I reply. "Well, have you soaked much money?" All this time I'm getting perplexed as to this big-booted gentleman's ideas, so to change the subject I ventured to remark, "Barley's low, isn't it?" "Low! I believe you. I made up my mind when I seed your pictures on the fence I was coming—yes, sir; I must see your show." I thank him. "Yes, we had several shows here—Cy Perkins, you know him I guess, he was here. Big price; I didn't go, thought I'd wait for you." Again I thank him. "Wall, Harry, it does me good to see you. Mind you, I don't want to see your show, I seed it at Sherbrooke ten years ago, but I told the old woman and the youngsters, so you might jest as well give me four tickets for them, I don't want none myself." I give them and sanctify his retreat.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MY MARYLAND.

With "The Castaways," a nautical play—my own adaptation—I have toured every city almost in Ohio, Pennsylvania and the Middle States, but from all one night stands, I say, "Good Lord deliver us." I have also known what it is to travel there sick with "la grippe," and unable to speak above a whisper. Finally, in the mountains of Tennessee I had to succumb, and allow my wife to play my part. In Philadelphia, after first night's performance, I arranged with Forepaugh for my son, Walter, to walk in his father's shoes. When in Asheville, N.C., where Vanderbilt is spending millions, I was knocked over by cold. A doctor came, felt my pulse, prescribed and said, "This is chronic, is it? Well, you'll be well directly. Our city is noted for its health." (It was at this period foggy—cold, bitter cold, muddy, rainy.) I have remarked that for invalids this is the climate. "Why, we are 8,000 feet above the sea." I replied, "Put me in Maryland on the eastern shore, one inch above the sea, and I'll recover," and it was true. Did any of our readers ever visit the "Eastern Sho," so called because it is located on that side of a glorious sea, "Chesapeake Bay." Commencing at Baltimore and terminating at Norfolk, it is, without doubt, the richest bay in the world, and in addition it is a paradise to the sportsman. One of my friends, eulogizing its manifold beauties, summed up when asked for a description by saying: "Well, oysters in it and peaches out of it." Like him I could rhapsodize on the charms of "My Maryland" without ceasing, only I fear that readers might take this for an emigration prospectus. The Peninsula, as it is known, is composed of portions of three States, Maryland, Deleware, and for reasons unknown to me, Virginia. Fancy a railroad (over one hundred and fifty miles) traversing its centre, and ballasted with oyster shells. Imagine all the pike roads shell roads. Think of towns, 4,000 inhabitants, like Crisfield, built on oyster shells, with no fresh drinking water, but relying on "the gentle dew from heaven." Conceive a continent deriving the bulk of its oyster supply from this and its kindred bay Deleware, and

one cannot fail to wonder at the extraordinary fecundity of the bivalve. Fish unlimited, and terrapin not scarce, with that extraordinary esculate, the soft shell crab, in plenty. Then the country—almost a level fertile plain—rich in soil; with glorious rivers like the Chester, the Tredavon, or the Choptauks running through it; miles of peach trees; berries unlimited; tomatoes and sweet potatoes a drug, whilst cereals flourish, and when spring comes and nature is in its best garb, this might stand as suggestive of the Garden of Eden. Its people proud, hospitable and generous—if one excepts the oystermen, and by excepting them it must be understood that generally speaking they are the refuse of other cities.

Baltimore, sometimes called the Rome of America, is theatrically speaking a city of appreciation. During many years I have played at several theatres there. At Front Street Theatre during the reign of many managers, from Col. Sinn onwards, I have supported stars and played my own lurid melodramas, such as "Euchre" (not the Phœnix), Bride of the West, the Castaways, and last year we filled the house to overflowing during Holy Week with a conglomeration, entitled, "Sitting Bull, last of the Sioux." The last time I saw J. K. Emmett was some years ago at a benefit, where we assisted—at the Holiday Street Theatre. There is not a town or village in this section from Wilmington to Cape Charles where I do not hold friends. I have toured it with all kinds of attractions, from Alice Oates to "Guild of Dramatic Art," in which latter we carried a brass band, and did a parade on the streets, and since then my own company has become almost a regular institution.

At Salisbury. I played in its first theatre, built by a Jewish friend of mine, with a dread of fire, who if he sees red fire on a pan will follow the property man everywhere he moves with a section of hose, ready to extinguish flames and property man. I was the first theatrical manager in Cape Charles, Va., which will be ultimately a large city, and the same in Newport News. Then again at Cambridge, Md., which stands beautifully on the Choptauk, I am a recognized pioneer, whilst Denton, Centreville and Easton (in which latter town dwells a noble looking representative of the Washington Government, the talented Senator Gibson) hold me in respect. Going down the Chester river I recently saw the only wild swans in my remem-

brance. On the peninsula I have played state fairs at Dover, Del., which has as high a theatre as any in America, as you travel six flights of stairs to reach it. It is the capital, and a visit to the jail is interesting as one can see—old time punishments in vogue—the stocks, the pillory and the lash, and from enquiry and observation I have arrived at the conclusion that for crimes perpetrated by negroes, these are deterrents. Then amidst other towns on the other shore I have wandered to Chincoteaque Islands, the home of wild ponies, and the Mecca of sportsmen. Maryland is looked upon generally as a small State, but such is not the case, as its extent is large, and its mineral wealth in addition is fabulous. Cumberland is a fine city, and the coal districts around it are like all others of that nature, but I have kindly memories of Frostburg. In Frederick City one can go around old battle fields, but, although there is the church where "Stonewall" prayed, I think the most rabid Unionist will concede that the verses of "Barbara Frietchie" are a poetic myth. Annapolis, the capital of Maryland, with the finest location conceivable, does not strike one very favorably. It seems like a relic of a past era, if one excepts the beautifully laid out Naval Academy. Its streets are quaint, and, Bostonian, leading to anywhere but where you expected to go, and then you have streets with ancient nomenclature; even Anne Arundell is not forgotten; whilst you can see the former home of Lord Baltimore, and can find the oldest records of estate sales in America. The state house will not enchant lovers of architecture. On my last visit a Gas Bill was on, and the legislators lolled, talked, smoked and spat, in fact, a bear garden could not be more animated. The city has its counterpart theatrically and otherwise in Alexandria, Va. Neither of them is progressing, and in the latter city Braddock's meeting place with Geo. Washington was being used as a chicken house when last I saw it, although they have scrupulously guarded his masonic chair.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CAPTAIN CRAWFORD—STAGE CHILDREN—POCAHONTAS—DRUMMERS.

In conversation with Capt. Jack Crawford, the "Poet Scout," I was led to ruminate over the advantages that speculative managers have over the combination manager. When one reflects that in most of these houses the first money, say $500 to $1,000, is deducted before the company get their half of what follows, and that in nearly every theatre the lithograph and other privileges amounts to 500 to 1000 free admissions, it is easily seen that "all is not gold that glitters." The Captain had seen the truth of this in a play of his own, and was awaiting developments when we gave him a benefit in Youngstown, Ohio. I turned out a procession on the streets calculated to inspire the public with dramatic longings. Ten or twelve horses, carriages, cowboys (of native manufacture), negroes (of cork descent with burnt cork physiognomies), Indians (as red as ochre could make them), Irishmen (as stagy as could be devised), and a Jew on horseback. The Jew was mounted on a mule which was suffering from dyspepsia, the Indian was throwing summersaults, and a brass band doled out G.A.R. strains. We drew the house. Crawford is an able *raconteur* of stories. His poems are of the home-spun school, but they have a jingle and the "Bret Harte" flavour, and his career as scout is phenomenal. In course of conversation he gave a *resume* of his life, and to his credit be it spoken in a career like his, he can boast that neither by desire, cajolery or force has one drop of alcoholic liquor ever passed his lips. In my engagements my experience has been similar to his—the local manager has nearly always the advantage. Touring through Wheeling, W. Va., and cities of that class I have found an attractive child a card, and we have not been subjected to the tyranny of societies for suppression of vice, or other kindred names, who in New York prevent them from earning their bread.

I have observed that stage children are more petted and more cared for than others, and I know that their intellect or physical power is not over-strained by dramatic work, as witness Bijou Heron

LILLIE THE LINDLEY

(who in her day was brightest of them all), Corienne, Elsie Leslie, Little Tommy Russell, the innumerable Evas, and one who was with me two years, Little Mabel Page, who is now starring south, and is the most versatile I ever saw.

These children like their work, are pampered by the public, and like older children evince a keen knowledge of the appreciation of the public. My own child, Little Ethel, only three years old, appeared with me in a melodrama in which I enacted a nigger and she an Indian. The public on one matinee were not so demonstrative as usual and she did not get her recall. Sranding at the wing, disconsolately, the tiny one lisped out, "Um—don't they like me?"

This leads me on to a little experience where our children were feted in a roughish mining town last Christmas in Pocahontas, Va.

A drummer—now I have to digress for a while. Speaking of drummers or commercial travellers. What better friend has the dramatic profession? He will extol his wares during the day but he will generally manage to advertise a show at the same time. They will pay their money more freely than others, make a point to visit every attraction, and what is extraordinary, will go out of their way to praise rather than condemn. Perhaps it is Bohemianism—or is it that these knights of the road are chastened by travel and therefore bear sympathy for the knights of the "sock and buckskin." South Carolina is not an El Dorado when cotton is as low as it was last year. I was dragging my weary length along—no patronage, railroad journeys expensive, with a fight with the *Columbia State* (newspaper) on my hands, and minor drawbacks, including sickness. Our sole reliance seemed to be on these commercial tourists, who were, as our phraseology goes, playing in almost as hard luck as we were. In Laurens with us were twelve of these itinerant supplicaters, all equally discouraged. Queried as to sales. No sales, replied one; nary an order, another; and similar answers until it finally reached one attenuated gentleman (his first trip) who piped out "I've got a forty dollar line." A yell followed, with the sudden elevation of the successful novice on the shoulders of his co-mates. A procession of singing, roaring, perspiring humanity, and the cost of innumerable drinks to the fortunate drummer. These gentlemen are generally a faithful index of routes and locations, and one of them was extravagant in praise of Pocahontas.

But a few years ago the poet who cried—

"Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,"

could have found it in this spot, which lies cosily nestled midst Alpine hills. Here Pocahontas, beloved of John Smith, might have roamed at will, unmolested by European, with rum and other civilizing influences. Pocahontas sounds symbolical of all that is American, but Pocahontas, the town, might better bear the name of Kossuth, as its inhabitants are mostly Hungarians. We were there for Christmas day. The children of the Histrions had their customary Christmas tree. Peace and good will reigned within—whiskey and ill will reigned without. From early Christmas morn a tide of miners might be seen flowing upwards to the mammoth saloons, which are characteristic of the town, and bearing with them the deadly demijohn.

A matinee was given to a fair attendance, but during its progress occasional yells, fights, curses and pistols could be heard upon the streets. Clad in satins might be seen viragos of the *demi monde* in wordy encounter, and one colored disciple of that order indulging in fisticuffs with a male, and nature's weapons proving insufficient, hurling stones promiscuously. An occasional broken head seemed, however, to be the total result of their Bacchanalian revelry. The Mayor, a genial Irishman, having heard that the cells were inconveniently crowded, kindly consented to give an extra judicial sitting, so as to fine and release the prisoners and make room for others. Here a Hungarian saloon-keeper insisted upon me sharing a bottle of imperial Tokay, and with genuine pride produced the invoice to show me that it came from his native land. The town is rich. Nature has given it hills of coal. Introduce a pickaxe and shovel into any of these hills and you have the "dusky diamonds." Unlike Pennsylvania, wages are good, and people are generally well housed and fed.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DRAMATIC ICONOCLASM.

It is easier to destroy than to build, but the whole tenor of the day seems to be to break the conventional barriers and dissect the traditions of the past as regards history, biography and antiquity. But what will be said of me when I prepare to do the same in dramatic matters. A critic of the modern school is nothing if not analytical. He does not altogether remember that he should be describing what he actually sees, but he goes into the metaphysics of the character—the thoughts, feelings and idiosyncracies of its exponent, in fact he is not endeavoring to exalt or diminish the skill of the artist, but he is permeating his critique with the egoism of the critic. He will in his article point out the lights, shades, defects, beauties and rhapsodize over the delicacy of the embodiment, whilst these are imperceptible to the ordinary beholder who only sees amusement in the delineation and cares nothing for the analysis. Take the articles on a modern actor, who, like Jefferson, has probably, for a quarter of a century, given his idea of "Rip Van Winkle." It will be considered treason to the stage if one should dare to say, after reading a critique on his performance, wherein the originality, the reality, the naturalness are praised to fulsomeness, that all this is absolutely absurd. Actors are merely creatures of traditions and circumstance. Has "Rip Van Winkle," as placed on the stage by Mr. Jefferson, the qualities above described? The originality, whence did it spring, from Washington Irving in story? Yes. Upon the stage for years did not J. H. Hackett illustrate the vagaries of the drunken slumberer? And he was an artist, but even he was a copyist of another. His genius originated a feeble and artificial stage portraiture, which was padded up by the king of padders, Dion Boucicault, to its present fulness. The spirits of the Catskills are too suggestive of comic pantomime to impress the spectator with their startling reality, and as for the naturalness of the play, well, "they have come as near to nature as they can for a shilling." Even the most taking line in the last act, "Give me a cold potato and let me go," is dragged in bodily

from an old drama, "The Beggar's Petition." So much for the originality. This is not detracting from the skill of Mr. Jefferson, who undoubtedly is a great comedian, but merely to show that the words "original and natural" so much affected are *mal apropos*. Bob Acres is another conventional piece of humor. In the comedy, at the Haymarket, in its prime, with Buckstone, elder Chippendale, Farren, Crompton, etc., it was original, in a measure, but only in a measure, for have we not a counterpart in "Rare Ben Johnson." Now-a-days it is made a gallimaufry of farce and might be termed the "Yankee Duellist," with as much veracity. Critiques will say "he felt the part." Does any gentleman playing "Romeo," and suffering the pangs of stomach ache or ear ache, feel the part? Yes; he feels the part affected.

To forget these qualms is not nature, it is art. The tragedians with whom a certain amount of bombast and fustian is necessary to the character are also accused of the natural manner in which they play their parts, then spontaneity and their wondrous self-forgetfulness. To forget their personality would be self destruction. The star is the central figure—the rest are puppets in his fingers—to make a point he will move them like chessmen at will. All this must be understood prior to the performance, or probably Laertes would be trampling over the King, Ophelia might get entangled in the train of the bestial Queen of Denmark, and an intelligent super run his javelin into the back of the Player Queen. The business, technically so called, has been handed down from generation to generation of actors. There may be a varied cross or pause or reading, but this small interpolation will not give them the right of o'er laying the Bard himself. A point is made thus. The writer played Polonius with Edwin Booth. Mr. Booth, in his scene of "Do you see yonder cloud," looked through a window, then with pauses came down stage and looked in the face of the effete chamberlain. At rehearsal the writer queried, "What do I do in this corner?" Mr. Booth—"I am merely impressing the non-insanity of Hamlet upon the audience." But "What do I do?" was the answer. "Look like a silly old man." The writer was popular and at night he essayed to do so. The audience laughed. "What are you doing?" quoth he sotto voce, "Looking like a silly old man," was the reply. Still the point was made.

Every turn, cross and position of the underlings must be subservient to the star, and their obedience in adhering to his behest increases his greatness. "The combat was a picture of real ferocity," I have read in the morning papers—but provided Richmond missed a rehearsed blow, would not Richard squeal, therefore, the ferocity must be carefully guarded and blows artistically counted, or between the combatants there would be real bad blood, as on one occasion in the French Spy—the queen of pantomime art, "Madame Celeste" had a new "Mohammed" who struck her two blows on the finger. She became enraged and with audible *sacres* smote the accursed dog until he incontinently fled. This is natural, but it is too natural for the stage. There is little if anything new under the dramatic sun. Scrape off the veneer and you will find its prototype. It is the treatment of the subject. The critics will also in their notice of a drama possibly say, "Mr. So and So created the part." Where was the author? He creates—the actor delineates. What would Mr. Shakespeare have said if this train had been used of his divine creations. Now-a-days it is more of *imitation* than creation. The creations of Fanny Davenport are merely French copies. Bernhardt has copied the methods of Rachel. Daly has his German prototypes, and farce comedy is as old as the hills. The greatest of them all in Yankee portraiture will find his precursor in Rosina Meadows, which is but an Americanized version of the "Luke the Laborer" school. Again, the greatest actors have made the greatest pauses, and pauses which were unnatural, and the greatest effects have been made by conversational transitions. It is said Macready made one great transition which I have seen copied in Macbeth, and which the audience applauded. The impetuous Thane almost hurls his command at Seyton, "Give me mine armour," and then ultra colloqially says, "How does your patient doctor?" These are telling stage contrasts, but no one can call them natural sequences. It would almost seem from the public standpoint that the most unnatural acting achieves the greatest success. The school of realism, which takes in trains in motion, saw mills in action, steamboats in transit, with explosions here and fearful denouements there and everywhere, is so full of unrealism that it is unnecessary to dilate upon it, but it is conclusive enough to show that natural acting on the stage, which is so often lauded by the critic, is an absolute impossibility.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ADVANCEMENT—CHURCH AND STAGE.

The last chapter was merely intended as an exampler of the falsity of natural gifts unless accompanied by mechanical skill, study and practice.

The question now arises, Has the stage improved within the past forty years?

As regards scenic and mechanical effect, yes. As regards minutiæ of detail and costume, yes. This can be seen in the case of costume by two engravings, of Booth as Iago and Edwin Forrest as Richard III., taken thirty years ago. As regards personal and artistic merit, no. As regards literary productions, no. It is customary to berate the man who speaks of the glories of departed dramatic days, but pray pardon him, for there is show of reason. Shakespeare is comparatively shelved, and in Mr. Booth's exit departs his only recognized exponent, if one excepts Mr. Keene, who has much power. Even Knowles and Lytton are becoming extinct. What is given us instead? A peculiarly named article called "Society Plays," wherein there is a feeble effort to follow the tone and plot of "She Stoops to Conquer," but which do not reach that standard.

Take Mr. Mansfield, a great actor who is shuffling uneasily to find a vehicle for his talents, and finds nothing but Prince Karl, or a feeble version of Beau Brunnel, or a resurrected edition of Dr. Warren's "Ten Thousand a Year," all unworthy his talents, or another fine melodramatist, Mantell, with his gloomy "Monbars," &c.

Then, again, the church is fighting against the stage, as witness the following from the Toronto *Empire* of November 26th, which is only one of many.

OPEN LETTER FROM HARRY LINDLEY TO DR. GALBRAITH.

Reverend Brother,—Will you kindly read contrast as below taken from Evening *News* on Monday last, which I believe is a digest of your sermon of Sunday, and as Shakespeare says, "Look on this picture and on that."

EDWIN FORREST AS RICHARD III. 30 YEARS AGO.

CAN PHOTO ENG CO

CHURCH.

MONTREAL, Nov. 20.—Father Guyhot, the priest whose misconduct in betraying the wife of a prominent citizen by means of the confessional, created such a furore some time ago, is now said to be selling dry goods in a store in Albany. He makes an excellent salesman. His victim is still in the house of the Good Shepherd.

Another sensation has been caused in clerical circles by the suspension of Rev. Father Salmon, of the east end. His orgies, it is said, have of late been scandalous, and Archbishop Fabre has at length been compelled to act. Salmon has been retired to the monastery at Oka. He thinks he has been badly treated and has appealed to Rome.

At the opening of an Anglican Church at Point St. Henri last week a number of Romanists created a disturbance. The parish priest on Sunday denounced them from the pulpit.

THEATRES.

"People who have generally patronized the theatre have been of the worst class of society," thundered Dr. Galbraith last night in the Berkeley Street Methodist Church. He made one of the most severe denunciations of the theatre ever heard from a Toronto pulpit.

He would not say that no men or women of pure character ever entered there, or that no christians have appeared on the stage, but affirmed that people who generally support theatres are the worst class of the community. Good people ought not to be there.

"All the vices that scatter fortune, produce immorality, undermine health, and that lead to hell are within the precincts of the theatre," exclaimed the pastor.

"The blackest rakes, harlots, fallen women, thieves and gamblers go there in multitudes. The average theatre is debasing and demoralizing. It is a scene of vice. Persons associated with the stage often leads scandalous lives."

This is a sad state of affairs, but if you will refer to last Sunday's Chicago press you will find incarcerated for an abominable offence one Methodist minister, and for other penal sins a Presbyterian, a Baptist and an Episcopalian, showing that vice is not confined to the Roman Catholic Church, which is purer than the others by contrast. I am not endeavoring to cast discredit upon the church, which has everything in it to admire, if the precepts of Christ are followed; nor am I endeavoring to cast a stone at its exponents, for there are some of the most virtuous and noblest amongst its ranks, and to them is given the greatest of all virtues, "charity." Reverend brother, you have specified two distinct classes—harlots, fallen women. I am not familiar enough with them to define the distinction. You say, "Persons associated with the stage often lead scandalous lives." You may search the prison archives and you will not find an actor incarcerated for the lowest class of crime like above quoted. I do not know who patronize Toronto theatres, whether they are the "worst of society," as represented by you or not, but I would consider it an insult if it were said of the pure women who have in Canada patronized me. I have not read so sweeping a condemnation for some time, although I once heard

the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher preach against theatres, and yet this eminent divine, when over fifty years, was induced to visit Henry Irving and had nobility of soul enough to recant his opinion. Rev. Galbraith, from the tone of your letter, I imagine your experience of theatres must have been of the lowest type, and I ask you to remember that upon the stage, as in the pulpit, we have wives, mothers, sisters, children, and children who are taught to pray as mine have been.

HARRY LINDLEY,
Comedian.

The vapid blatant vapourings of a reverend Boanerges, eager for notoriety, cannot destroy the stage, any more than the howlings of Ingersollian infidels can destroy the sacred church. The drama, emanating from and illustrated by the church in its miracle plays, has withstood much abuse. Its exponents have met the withering scorn of its detractors, but even if there be an occasional sinner on the stage, shall we destroy what is good in the whole fabric, any more than because there is a Cantwell or a Mawmorn in the pulpit, we should destroy religion itself. I have spoken of Sheridan Knowles, Baptist minister, dramatist, actor. In all his writings—take "Hunchback," "Love," "The Wife, "The Love Chase," &c.—you will not find a purer tone, more brilliant poetry, or nobler sentiment in English literature. You will find in this profession no more ardent worshippers than its Catholic members. You will find no one more eager to stand well with the religious world than most actors. I have heard them regret that they have had to give up their early teachings in some denomination, and quit the church they loved on account of its denunciations.

Nearly twenty years ago Mr. Holland, of Wallack's Theatre died. His relatives visited the clergyman of the church where he had worshipped, and he refused to read the burial service over the dead actor. The sorrowing relatives queried what they should do? "Take him to the Little Church Around the Corner," was the response. They did, and found a clergyman who had Christian charity. What was the result? Every actor in New York looks upon that church as his. He is welcome to God's Temple; he has a spiritual adviser; a certainty that when consigned to dust there will be one kindly, reverent

EDWIN BOOTH AS IAGO 30 YEARS AGO.

minister to pray for his immortal soul, and he knows no sect, denomination or schism, save the "Little Church Around the Corner." To the credit of the profession it may be added that at the present time Dr. Houghton expressed a wish to make improvements, and the actors have subscribed more money than he needed.

Now, a word to the members of the Craft. The greatest enemy of the stage is within itself. In England there is a Lord Chamberlain who acts as censor of the drama, but the public should be its own censor. The tone of plays is not being raised. The old time manager who had pride in his theatre and company has departed; his tendency was to elevate, but his followers, with few exceptions, have but one thought, gain. If "Thou shalt not" (which fortunately fell flat) should draw money the manager of to-day says the end justifies the means, and produces it. The novels of Zola, which should be interdicted as hotbeds of filth, are it is true sold openly in book stores and on trains. They are supposed to be productions of a great litterateur, but if so, and his descriptions are true of Paris life of to-day, it is a pity that the Germans did not obliterate the city in '67. If life be as Zola paints it, is that life worth living for or worthy of reproduction? His literary art is praised as being descriptive, but if he had been born a painter he would rather have used his brush in painting a rotten cabbage than a beauteous rose. Then what a fall is there when a theme of his is foisted upon the dramatic public. Take the Clamenceau Case as another sample. These have found their way into decent theatres, but do not condemn the actors for it is the manager not the performer who is to blame, whilst the public who patronizes these productions and does so knowingly, is not guiltless. There is not a disciple of Thespis who would not feel prouder and richer if he were enabled to earn his bread in the loftier or more ennobling walk of his art. He must live—he is unfitted for other occupation—and to feed himself and wife and little ones, he will barter his manhood for the lure—filthy lucre—held out to him by these traffickers to the desires of the depraved. This has been my experience, and now with best wishes for a higher tone of productions, in which my brethren of the sock and buckskin will join me, I ring down the curtain.

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